

VIEWPOINT

What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work

Dolores Hayden

"A woman's place is in the home" has been one of the most important principles of architectural design and urban planning in the United States for the last century. An implicit rather than explicit principle for the conservative and male-dominated design professions, it will not be found stated in large type in textbooks on land use. It has generated much less debate than the other organizing principles of the contemporary American city in an era of monopoly capitalism, which include the ravaging pressure of private land development, the fetishistic dependence on millions of private automobiles, and the wasteful use of energy.¹ However, women have rejected this dogma and entered the paid

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1. There is an extensive Marxist literature on the importance of spatial design to the economic development of the capitalist city, including Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de l'espace* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1974); Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1977); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974); and David Gordon, "Capitalist Development and the History of American Cities," in *Marxism and the Metropolis*, ed. William K. Tabb and Larry Sawyers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). None of this work deals adequately with the situation of women as workers and homemakers, nor with the unique spatial inequalities they experience. Nevertheless, it is important to combine the economic and historical analysis of these scholars with the empirical research of non-Marxist feminist urban critics and sociologists who have examined women's experience of conventional housing, such as Gerda Wekerle,

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labor force in larger and larger numbers. Dwellings, neighborhoods, and cities designed for homebound women constrain women physically, socially, and economically. Acute frustration occurs when women defy these constraints to spend all or part of the work day in the paid labor force. I contend that the only remedy for this situation is to develop a new paradigm of the home, the neighborhood, and the city; to begin to describe the physical, social, and economic design of a human settlement that would support, rather than restrict, the activities of employed women and their families. It is essential to recognize such needs in order to begin both the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock and the construction of new housing to meet the needs of a new and growing majority of Americans—working women and their families.

When speaking of the American city in the last quarter of the twentieth century, a false distinction between “city” and “suburb” must be avoided. The urban region, organized to separate homes and workplaces, must be seen as a whole. In such urban regions, more than half of the population resides in the sprawling suburban areas, or “bedroom communities.” The greatest part of the built environment in the United States consists of “suburban sprawl”: single-family homes grouped in class-segregated areas, crisscrossed by freeways and served by shopping malls and commercial strip developments. Over 50 million small homes are on the ground. About two-thirds of American families “own” their homes on long mortgages; this includes over 77 percent of all AFL-CIO members.² White, male skilled workers are far more likely to be homeowners than members of minority groups and women, long denied equal credit or equal access to housing. Workers commute to jobs either in the center or elsewhere in the suburban ring. In metropolitan areas studied in 1975 and 1976, the journey to work, by public transit or private car, averaged about nine miles each way. Over 100 million privately owned cars filled two- and three-car garages (which would be con-

“A Woman’s Place Is in the City” (paper for the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Mass., 1978); and Suzanne Keller, “Women in a Planned Community” (paper for the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Mass., 1978). Only then can one begin to provide a socialist-feminist critique of the spatial design of the American city. It is also essential to develop research on housing similar to Sheila B. Kamerman, “Work and Family in Industrialized Societies,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4, no. 4 (Summer 1979): 632–50, which reviews patterns of women’s employment, maternity provisions, and child-care policies in Hungary, East Germany, West Germany, France, Sweden, and the United States. A comparable study of housing and related services for employed women could be the basis for more elaborate proposals for change. Many attempts to refine socialist and feminist economic theory concerning housework are discussed in an excellent article by Ellen Malos, “Housework and the Politics of Women’s Liberation,” *Socialist Review* 37 (January–February 1978): 41–47. A most significant theoretical piece is Movimento di Lotta Femminile, “Programmatic Manifesto for the Struggle of Housewives in the Neighborhood,” *Socialist Revolution* 9 (May–June 1972): 85–90.

2. *Survey of AFL-CIO Members Housing 1975* (Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO, 1975), p. 16. I am indebted to Allan Heskin for this reference.

sidered magnificent housing by themselves in many developing countries). The United States, with 13 percent of the world's population, uses 41 percent of the world's passenger cars in support of the housing and transportation patterns described.³

The roots of this American settlement form lie in the environmental and economic policies of the past. In the late nineteenth century, millions of immigrant families lived in the crowded, filthy slums of American industrial cities and despaired of achieving reasonable living conditions. However, many militant strikes and demonstrations between the 1890s and 1920s made some employers reconsider plant locations and housing issues in their search for industrial order.⁴ "Good homes make contented workers" was the slogan of the Industrial Housing Associates in 1919. These consultants and many others helped major corporations plan better housing for white male skilled workers and their families, in order to eliminate industrial conflict. "Happy workers invariably mean bigger profits, while unhappy workers are never a good investment," they chirruped.⁵ Men were to receive "family wages," and become home "owners" responsible for regular mortgage payments, while their wives became home "managers" taking care of spouse and children. The male worker would return from his day in the factory or office to a private domestic environment, secluded from the tense world of work in an industrial city characterized by environmental pollution, social degradation, and personal alienation. He would enter a serene dwelling whose physical and emotional maintenance would be the duty of his wife. Thus the private suburban house was the stage set for the effective sexual division of labor. It was the commodity par excellence, a spur for male paid labor and a container for female unpaid labor. It made gender appear a more important self-definition than class, and consumption more involving than production. In a brilliant discussion of the "patriarch as wage slave," Stuart Ewen has shown how capitalism and anti-feminism fused in campaigns for homeownership and mass consumption: the patriarch whose home was his "castle" was to work year in and year out to provide the wages to support this private environment.⁶

3. *Transit Fact Book*, 1977–78 ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Public Transit Association, 1978), p. 29; *Motor Vehicle Facts and Figures* (Detroit, Mich.: Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association, 1977), pp. 29, 31, 53.

4. Gordon, pp. 48–50, discusses suburban relocation of plants and housing.

5. Industrial Housing Associates, "Good Homes Make Contented Workers," 1919, Edith Elmer Wood Papers, Avery Library, Columbia University. Also see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, "The Manufacture of Housework," *Socialist Revolution* 5 (1975): 16. They quote an unidentified corporate official (ca. 1920): "Get them to invest their savings in homes and own them. Then they won't leave and they won't strike. It ties them down so they have a stake in our prosperity."

6. Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1976).

Although this strategy was first boosted by corporations interested in a docile labor force, it soon appealed to corporations who wished to move from World War I defense industries into peacetime production of domestic appliances for millions of families. The development of the advertising industry, documented by Ewen, supported this ideal of mass consumption and promoted the private suburban dwelling, which maximized appliance purchases.⁷ The occupants of the isolated household were suggestible. They bought the house itself, a car, stove, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, washer, carpets. Christine Frederick, explaining it in 1929 as *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, promoted homeownership and easier consumer credit and advised marketing managers on how to manipulate American women.⁸ By 1931 the Hoover Commission on Home Ownership and Home Building established the private, single-family home as a national goal, but a decade and a half of depression and war postponed its achievement. Architects designed houses for Mr. and Mrs. Bliss in a competition sponsored by General Electric in 1935; winners accommodated dozens of electrical appliances in their designs with no critique of the energy costs involved.⁹ In the late 1940s the single-family home was boosted by FHA and VA mortgages and the construction of isolated, overprivatized, energy-consuming dwellings became commonplace. "I'll Buy That Dream" made the postwar hit parade.¹⁰

Mrs. Consumer moved the economy to new heights in the fifties. Women who stayed at home experienced what Betty Friedan called the "feminine mystique" and Peter Filene renamed the "domestic mystique."¹¹ While the family occupied its private physical space, the mass media and social science experts invaded its psychological space more effectively than ever before.¹² With the increase in spatial privacy came pressure for conformity in consumption. Consumption was expensive.

7. Richard Walker, "Suburbanization in Passage," unpublished draft paper (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Department of Geography, 1977).

8. Christine Frederick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (New York: Business Bourse, 1929).

9. Carol Barkin, "Home, Mom, and Pie-in-the-Sky" (M. Arch. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1979), pp. 120–24, gives the details of this competition; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, in an unpublished lecture at M.I.T. in 1977, explained GE's choice of an energy-consuming design for its refrigerator in the 1920s, because this would increase demand for its generating equipment by municipalities.

10. Peter Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), p. 189.

11. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1974), p. 307, somewhat hysterically calls the home a "comfortable concentration camp"; Filene, p. 194, suggests that men are victimized by ideal homes too, thus "domestic" mystique.

12. Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family, and Personal Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), develops Friedman's earlier argument in a more systematic way. This phenomenon is misunderstood by Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), who seems to favor a return to the sanctity of the patriarchal home.

More and more married women joined the paid labor force, as the suggestible housewife needed to be both a frantic consumer and a paid worker to keep up with the family's bills. Just as the mass of white male workers had achieved the "dream houses" in suburbia where fantasies of patriarchal authority and consumption could be acted out, their spouses entered the world of paid employment. By 1975, the two-worker family accounted for 39 percent of American households. Another 13 percent were single-parent families, usually headed by women. Seven out of ten employed women were in the work force because of financial need. Over 50 percent of all children between one and seventeen had employed mothers.¹³

How does a conventional home serve the employed woman and her family? Badly. Whether it is in a suburban, exurban, or inner-city neighborhood, whether it is a split-level ranch house, a modern masterpiece of concrete and glass, or an old brick tenement, the house or apartment is almost invariably organized around the same set of spaces: kitchen, dining room, living room, bedrooms, garage or parking area. These spaces require someone to undertake private cooking, cleaning, child care, and usually private transportation if adults and children are to exist within it. Because of residential zoning practices, the typical dwelling will usually be physically removed from any shared community space—no commercial or communal day-care facilities, or laundry facilities, for example, are likely to be part of the dwelling's spatial domain. In many cases these facilities would be illegal if placed across property lines. They could also be illegal if located on residentially zoned sites. In some cases sharing such a private dwelling with other individuals (either relatives or those unrelated by blood) is also against the law.¹⁴

Within the private spaces of the dwelling, material culture works against the needs of the employed woman as much as zoning does, because the home is a box to be filled with commodities. Appliances are usually single-purpose, and often inefficient, energy-consuming machines, lined up in a room where the domestic work is done in isolation from the rest of the family. Rugs and carpets which need vacuuming, curtains which need laundering, and miscellaneous goods which need maintenance fill up the domestic spaces, often decorated in "colonial," "Mediterranean," "French Provincial," or other eclectic styles purveyed by discount and department stores to cheer up that bare box of an

13. Rosalyn Baxandall, Linda Gordon, and Susan Reverby, eds., *America's Working Women: A Documentary History, 1600 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976). For more detail, see Louise Kapp Howe, *Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Woman's Work* (New York: Avon Books, 1977).

14. Recent zoning fights on the commune issue have occurred in Santa Monica, Calif.; Wendy Schuman, "The Return of Togetherness," *New York Times* (March 20, 1977), reports frequent illegal down zoning by two-family groups in one-family residences in the New York area.

isolated house. Employed mothers usually are expected to, and almost invariably do, spend more time in private housework and child care than employed men; often they are expected to, and usually do, spend more time on commuting per mile traveled than men, because of their reliance on public transportation. One study found that 70 percent of adults without access to cars are female.¹⁵ Their residential neighborhoods are not likely to provide much support for their work activities. A "good" neighborhood is usually defined in terms of conventional shopping, schools, and perhaps public transit, rather than additional social services for the working parent, such as day care or evening clinics.

While two-worker families with both parents energetically cooperating can overcome some of the problems of existing housing patterns, households in crisis, such as subjects of wife and child battering, for example, are particularly vulnerable to its inadequacies. According to Colleen McGrath, every thirty seconds a woman is being battered somewhere in the United States. Most of these batterings occur in kitchens and bedrooms. The relationship between household isolation and battering, or between unpaid domestic labor and battering, can only be guessed, at this time, but there is no doubt that America's houses and households are literally shaking with domestic violence.¹⁶ In addition, millions of angry and upset women are treated with tranquilizers in the private home—one drug company advertises to doctors: "You can't change her environment but you can change her mood."¹⁷

The woman who does leave the isolated, single-family house or apartment finds very few real housing alternatives available to her.¹⁸ The typical divorced or battered woman currently seeks housing, employment, and child care simultaneously. She finds that matching her complex family requirements with the various available offerings by landlords, employers, and social services is impossible. One environment that unites housing, services, and jobs could resolve many difficulties, but the existing system of government services, intended to stabilize households and neighborhoods by ensuring the minimum conditions for a decent home life to all Americans, almost always assumes that the traditional household with a male worker and an unpaid homemaker is the goal to be achieved or simulated. In the face of massive demographic changes, programs such as public housing, AFDC, and food stamps still

15. Study by D. Foley cited in Wekerle (see n. 1 above).

16. Colleen McGrath, "The Crisis of Domestic Order," *Socialist Review* 9 (January–February 1979): 12, 23.

17. Research by Malcolm MacEwen, cited in *Associate Collegiate Schools of Architecture Newsletter* (March 1973), p. 6.

18. See, for example, Carol A. Brown, "Spatial Inequalities and Divorced Mothers" (paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, 1978); Susan Anderson-Khleif, research report for HUD on single-parent families and their housing, summarized in "Housing for Single Parents," *Research Report, MIT-Harvard Joint Center for Urban Studies* (April 1979), pp. 3–4.

attempt to support an ideal family living in an isolated house or apartment, with a full-time homemaker cooking meals and minding children many hours of the day.

By recognizing the need for a different kind of environment, far more efficient use can be made of funds now used for subsidies to individual households. Even for women with greater financial resources the need for better housing and services is obvious. Currently, more affluent women's problems as workers have been considered "private" problems—the lack of good day care, their lack of time. The aids to overcome an environment without child care, public transportation, or food service have been "private," commercially profitable solutions: maids and baby-sitters by the hour; franchise day care or extended television viewing; fast food service; easier credit for purchasing an automobile, a washer, or a microwave oven. Not only do these commercial solutions obscure the failure of American housing policies, they also generate bad conditions for other working women. Commercial day-care and fast-food franchises are the source of low-paying nonunion jobs without security. In this respect they resemble the use of private household workers by bourgeois women, who may never ask how their private maid or child-care worker arranges care for her own children. They also resemble the insidious effects of the use of television in the home as a substitute for developmental child care in the neighborhood. The logistical problems which all employed women face are not private problems, and they do not succumb to market solutions.

The problem is paradoxical: women cannot improve their status in the home unless their overall economic position in society is altered; women cannot improve their status in the paid labor force unless their domestic responsibilities are altered. Therefore, a program to achieve economic and environmental justice for women requires, by definition, a solution which overcomes the traditional divisions between the household and the market economy, the private dwelling and the workplace. One must transform the economic situation of the traditional homemaker whose skilled labor has been unpaid, but economically and socially necessary to society; one must also transform the domestic situation of the employed woman. If architects and urban designers were to recognize all employed women and their families as a constituency for new approaches to planning and design and were to reject all previous assumptions about "woman's place" in the home, what could we do? Is it possible to build non-sexist neighborhoods and design non-sexist cities? What would they be like?

Some countries have begun to develop new approaches to the needs of employed women. The Cuban Family Code of 1974 requires men to share housework and child care within the private home. The degree of its enforcement is uncertain, but in principle it aims at men's sharing what was formerly "women's work," which is essential to equality. The Family Code, however, does not remove work from the house, and relies

upon private negotiation between husband and wife for its day-to-day enforcement. Men feign incompetence, especially in the area of cooking, with tactics familiar to any reader of Patricia Mainardi's essay, "The Politics of Housework," and the sexual stereotyping of paid jobs for women outside the home, in day-care centers for example, has not been successfully challenged.¹⁹

Another experimental approach involves the development of special housing facilities for employed women and their families. The builder Otto Fick first introduced such a program in Copenhagen in 1903. In later years it was encouraged in Sweden by Alva Myrdal and by the architects Sven Ivar Lind and Sven Markelius. Called "service houses" or "collective houses," such projects (figs. 1 and 2) provide child care and cooked food along with housing for employed women and their families.²⁰ Like a few similar projects in the USSR in the 1920s, they aim at offering services, either on a commercial basis or subsidized by the state, to replace formerly private "women's work" performed in the household. The Scandinavian solution does not sufficiently challenge male exclusion from domestic work, nor does it deal with households' changing needs over the life cycle, but it recognizes that it is important for environmental design to change.

Some additional projects in Europe extend the scope of the service house to include the provision of services for the larger community or

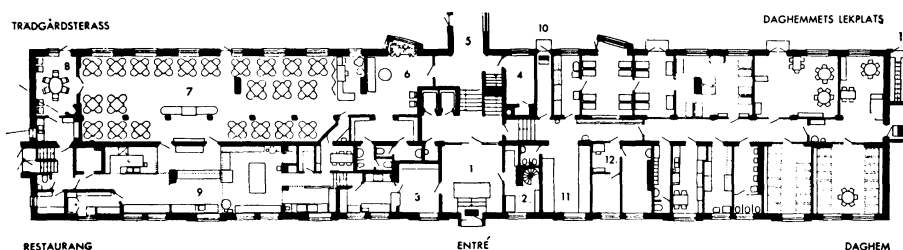


FIG. 1.—Sven Ivar Lind, Marieberg collective house, Stockholm, Sweden, 1944, plan of entrance (*entrée*), restaurant (*restaurang*), and day nursery (*daghem*). (1) entrance hall; (2) doorman's office; (3) restaurant delivery room; (4) real estate office; (5) connecting walkway to Swedberg house; (6) restaurant anteroom; (7) main dining room; (8) small dining room; (9) restaurant kitchen; (10) to day nursery's baby carriage room; (11) day nursery's baby carriage room; (12) office for day nursery's directress; (13) to Wennerberg house's cycle garage.

19. Patricia Mainardi, "The Politics of Housework," in *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Vintage Books, 1970). My discussion of the Cuban Family Code is based on a visit to Cuba in 1978; a general review is Carollee Bengelsdorf and Alice Hageman, "Emerging from Underdevelopment: Women and Work in Cuba," in *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, ed. Z. Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979). Also see Geoffrey E. Fox, "Honor, Shame and Women's Liberation in Cuba: Views of Working-Class Emigré Men," in *Female and Male in Latin America*, ed. A. Pescatello (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973).

20. Erwin Muhlestein, "Kollektives Wohnen gestern und heute," *Architese* 14 (1975): 3–23.

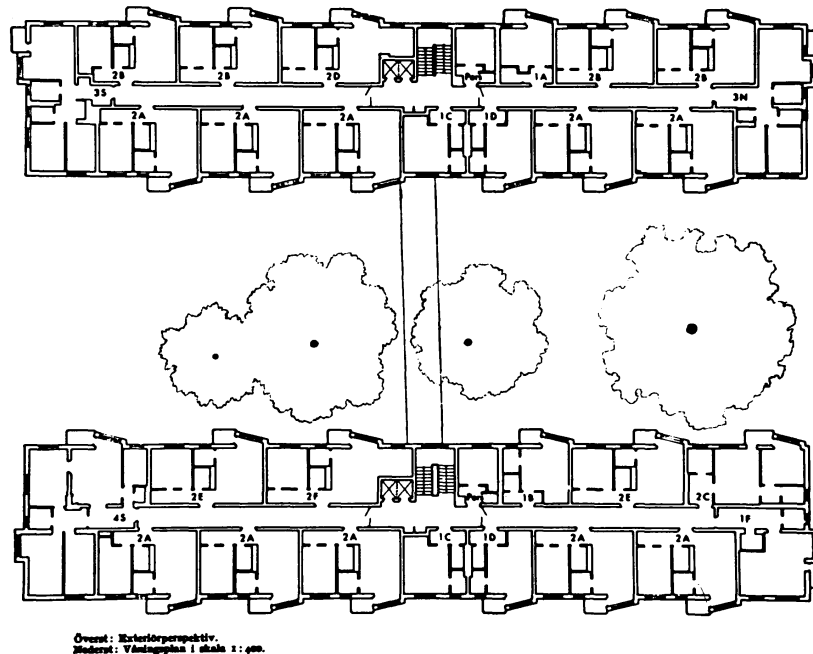


FIG. 2.—Plan of residential floors. Type 2A contains two rooms, bath, and kitchenette. Types 1C and 1D are efficiency units with bath and kitchenette. Type 4S includes four rooms with bath and full kitchen.

society. In the Steilshoop Project, in Hamburg, Germany, in the early 1970s, a group of parents and single people designed public housing with supporting services (fig. 3).²¹ The project included a number of former mental patients as residents and therefore served as a halfway house for them, in addition to providing support services for the public-housing tenants who organized it. It suggests the extent to which current American residential stereotypes can be broken down—the sick, the aged, the unmarried can be integrated into new types of households and housing complexes, rather than segregated in separate projects.

Another recent project was created in London by Nina West Homes, a development group established in 1972, which has built or renovated over sixty-three units of housing on six sites for single parents. Children's play areas or day-care centers are integrated with the dwellings; in their Fiona House project the housing is designed to facilitate shared baby-sitting, and the day-care center is open to the neighborhood residents for a fee (fig. 4). Thus the single parents can find jobs as day-care workers and help the neighborhood's working parents as well.²² What is most exciting here is the hint that home and work can be

21. This project relies on the “support structures” concept of John Habraken to provide flexible interior partitions and fixed mechanical core and structure.

22. "Bridge over Troubled Water," *Architects' Journal* (September 27, 1972), pp. 680–84; personal interview with Nina West, 1978.

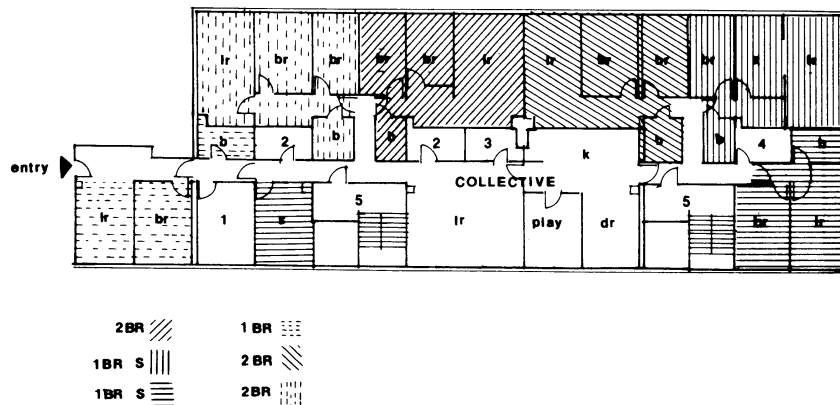


FIG. 3.—“Urbanes Wohnen” (urban living) Steilshoop, north of Hamburg, Germany, public housing for 206 tenants, designed by the tenant association in collaboration with Rolf Spille, 1970–73. Instead of seventy-two conventional units they built twenty multifamily units and two studios. Twenty-six mental patients were included in the project, of whom twenty-four recovered. Partial floor plan. Units include private bedrooms (br), living rooms (lr), and some studies (s). They share a collective living room, kitchen, dining room, and playroom. Each private apartment can be closed off from the collective space and each is different. (1) storage room; (2) closets; (3) wine cellar; (4) *buanderie*; (5) fire stair.

reunited on one site for some of the residents, and home and child-care services are reunited on one site for all of them.

In the United States, we have an even longer history of agitation for housing to reflect women's needs. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century there were dozens of projects by feminists, domestic scientists, and architects attempting to develop community services for private homes. By the late 1920s, few such experiments were still functioning.²³ In general, feminists of that era failed to recognize the problem of exploiting other women workers when providing services for those who could afford them. They also often failed to see men as responsible parents and workers in their attempts to socialize “women's” work. But feminist leaders had a very strong sense of the possibilities of neighborly cooperation among families and of the economic importance of “women's” work.

In addition, the United States has a long tradition of experimental utopian socialist communities building model towns, as well as the

23. Dolores Hayden, *A “Grand Domestic Revolution”: Feminism, Socialism and the American Home, 1870–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1980); “Two Utopian Feminists and Their Campaigns for Kitchenless Houses,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 274–90; “Melusina Fay Peirce and Cooperative Housekeeping,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 2 (1978): 404–20; “Challenging the American Domestic Ideal,” and “Catharine Beecher and the Politics of Housework,” in *Women in American Architecture*, ed. S. Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), pp. 22–39, 40–49; “Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Domestic Evolution or Domestic Revolution,” *Radical History Review*, vol. 21 (Winter 1979–80), in press.

example of many communes and collectives established in the 1960s and 1970s which attempted to broaden conventional definitions of household and family.²⁴ While some communal groups, especially religious ones, have often demanded acceptance of a traditional sexual division of labor, others have attempted to make nurturing activities a responsibility of both women and men. It is important to draw on the examples of successful projects of all kinds, in seeking an image of a non-sexist settle-

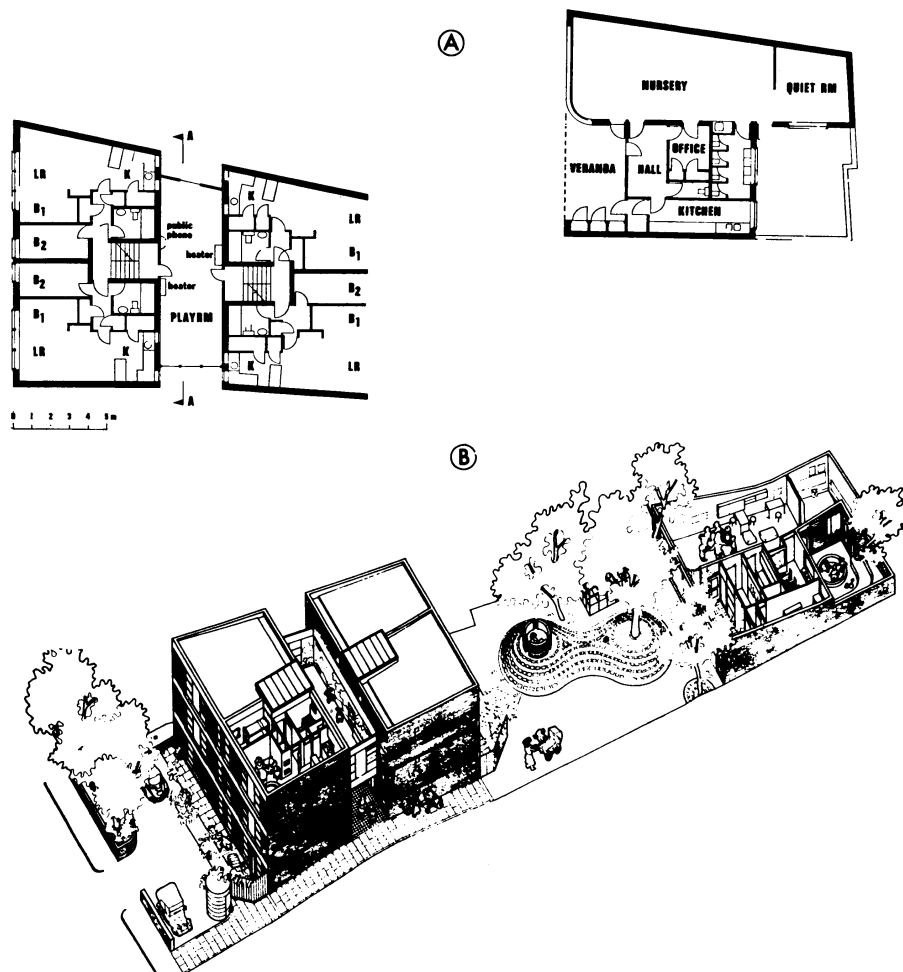


FIG. 4.—A, Fiona House, second-floor plan, main building, showing corridor used as playroom, with kitchen windows opening into it; first-floor plan, rear building, showing nursery school. B, Axonometric drawing, Fiona House, Nina West Homes, London 1972, designed by Sylvester Bone. Twelve two-bedroom units for divorced or separated mothers with additional outdoor play space, and neighborhood nursery school facility. Flats can be linked by intercom system to provide an audio substitute for baby-sitting.

24. Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790–1975* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1976), discusses historical examples and includes a discussion of communes of the 1960s and 1970s, “Edge City, Heart City, Drop City: Communal Building Today,” pp. 320–47.

ment. Most employed women are not interested in taking themselves and their families to live in communal families, nor are they interested in having state bureaucracies run family life. They desire, not an end to private life altogether, but community services to support the private household. They also desire solutions which reinforce their economic independence and maximize their personal choices about child rearing and sociability.

What, then, would be the outline of a program for change in the United States? The task of reorganizing both home and work can only be accomplished by organizations of homemakers, women and men dedicated to making changes in the ways that Americans deal with private life and public responsibilities. They must be small, participatory organizations with members who can work together effectively. I propose calling such groups HOMES (Homemakers Organization for a More Egalitarian Society). Existing feminist groups, especially those providing shelters for battered wives and children, may wish to form HOMES to take over existing housing projects and develop services for residents as an extension of those offered by feminist counselors in the shelter. Existing organizations supporting cooperative ownership of housing may wish to form HOMES to extend their housing efforts in a feminist direction. A program broad enough to transform housework, housing, and residential neighborhoods must: (1) involve both men and women in the unpaid labor associated with housekeeping and child care on an equal basis; (2) involve both men and women in the paid labor force on an equal basis; (3) eliminate residential segregation by class, race, and age; (4) eliminate all federal, state, and local programs and laws which offer implicit or explicit reinforcement of the unpaid role of the female homemaker; (5) minimize unpaid domestic labor and wasteful energy consumption; (6) maximize real choices for households concerning recreation and sociability. While many partial reforms can support these goals, an incremental strategy cannot achieve them. I believe that the establishment of experimental residential centers, which in their architectural design and economic organization transcend traditional definitions of home, neighborhood, city, and workplace, will be necessary to make changes on this scale. These centers could be created through renovation of existing neighborhoods or through new construction.

Suppose forty households in a U.S. metropolitan area formed a HOMES group and that those households, in their composition, represented the social structure of the American population as a whole. Those forty households would include: seven single parents and their fourteen children (15 percent); sixteen two-worker couples and their twenty-four children (40 percent); thirteen one-worker couples and their twenty-six children (35 percent); and four single residents, some of them "displaced homemakers" (10 percent). The residents would include sixty-nine adults and sixty-four children. There would need to be forty private dwelling units, ranging in size from efficiency to three bedrooms, all

with private fenced outdoor space. In addition to the private housing, the group would provide the following collective spaces and activities: (1) a day-care center with landscaped outdoor space, providing day care for forty children and after-school activities for sixty-four children; (2) a laundromat providing laundry service; (3) a kitchen providing lunches for the day-care center, take-out evening meals, and "meals-on-wheels" for elderly people in the neighborhood; (4) a grocery depot, connected to a local food cooperative; (5) a garage with two vans providing dial-a-ride service and meals-on-wheels; (6) a garden (or allotments) where some food can be grown; (7) a home help office providing helpers for the elderly, the sick, and employed parents whose children are sick. The use of all of these collective services should be voluntary; they would exist in addition to private dwelling units and private gardens.

To provide all of the above services, thirty-seven workers would be necessary: twenty day-care workers; three food-service workers; one grocery-depot worker; five home helpers; two drivers of service vehicles; two laundry workers; one maintenance worker; one gardener; two administrative staff. Some of these may be part-time workers, some full-time. Day care, food services, and elderly services could be organized as producers' cooperatives, and other workers could be employed by the housing cooperative as discussed below.

Because HOMES is not intended as an experiment in isolated community buildings but as an experiment in meeting employed women's needs in an urban area, its services should be available to the neighborhood in which the experiment is located. This will increase demand for the services and insure that the jobs are real ones. In addition, although residents of HOMES should have priority for the jobs, there will be many who choose outside work. So some local residents may take jobs within the experiment.

In creating and filling these jobs it will be important to avoid traditional sex stereotyping that would result from hiring only men as drivers, for example, or only women as food-service workers. Every effort should be made to break down separate categories of paid work for women and men, just as efforts should be made to recruit men who accept an equal share of domestic responsibilities as residents. A version of the Cuban Family Code should become part of the organization's platform.

Similarly, HOMES must not create a two-class society with residents outside the project making more money than residents in HOMES jobs that utilize some of their existing domestic skills. The HOMES jobs should be paid according to egalitarian rather than sex-stereotyped attitudes about skills and hours. These jobs must be all classified as skilled work rather than as unskilled or semiskilled at present, and offer full social security and health benefits, including adequate maternity leave, whether workers are part-time or full-time.

Many federal Housing and Urban Development programs support

the construction of nonprofit, low- and moderate-cost housing, including section 106b, section 202, and section 8. In addition, HUD section 213 funds are available to provide mortgage insurance for the conversion of existing housing of five or more units to housing cooperatives. HEW programs also fund special facilities such as day-care centers or meals-on-wheels for the elderly. In addition, HUD and HEW offer funds for demonstration projects which meet community needs in new ways.²⁵ Many trade unions, churches, and tenant cooperative organizations are active as nonprofit housing developers. A limited-equity housing cooperative offers the best basis for economic organization and control of both physical design and social policy by the residents.

Many knowledgeable nonprofit developers could aid community groups wishing to organize such projects, as could architects experienced in the design of housing cooperatives. What has not been attempted is the reintegration of work activities and collective services into housing cooperatives on a large enough scale to make a real difference to employed women. Feminists in trade unions where a majority of members are women may wish to consider building cooperative housing with services for their members. Other trade unions may wish to consider investing in such projects. Feminists in the co-op movement must make strong, clear demands to get such services from existing housing cooperatives, rather than simply go along with plans for conventional housing organized on a cooperative economic basis. Feminists outside the cooperative movement will find that cooperative organizational forms offer many possibilities for supporting their housing activities and other services to women. In addition, the recently established national Consumer Cooperative Bank has funds to support projects of all kinds which can be tied to cooperative housing.

In many areas, the rehabilitation of existing housing may be more desirable than new construction. The suburban housing stock in the United States must be dealt with effectively. A little bit of it is of architectural quality sufficient to deserve preservation; most of it can be aesthetically improved by the physical evidence of more intense social activity. To replace empty front lawns without sidewalks, neighbors can create blocks where single units are converted to multiple units; interior land is pooled to create a parklike setting at the center of the block; front and side lawns are fenced to make private outdoor spaces; pedestrian paths and sidewalks are created to link all units with the central open space; and some private porches, garages, tool sheds, utility rooms, and family rooms are converted to community facilities such as children's play areas, dial-a-ride garages, and laundries.

Figure 5A shows a typical bleak suburban block of thirteen houses,

25. I am indebted to Geraldine Kennedy and Sally Kratz, whose unpublished papers, "Toward Financing Cooperative Housing," and "Social Assistance Programs Whose Funds Could Be Redirected to Collective Services," were prepared for my UCLA graduate seminar in spring 1979.

constructed by speculators at different times, where about four acres are divided into plots of one-fourth to one-half acre each. Thirteen driveways are used by twenty-six cars; ten garden sheds, ten swings, thirteen lawn mowers, thirteen outdoor dining tables, begin to suggest the wasteful duplication of existing amenities. Yet despite the available land there are no transitions between public streets and these private homes. Space is either strictly private or strictly public. Figure 6A shows a typical one-family house of 1,400 square feet on this block. With three bedrooms

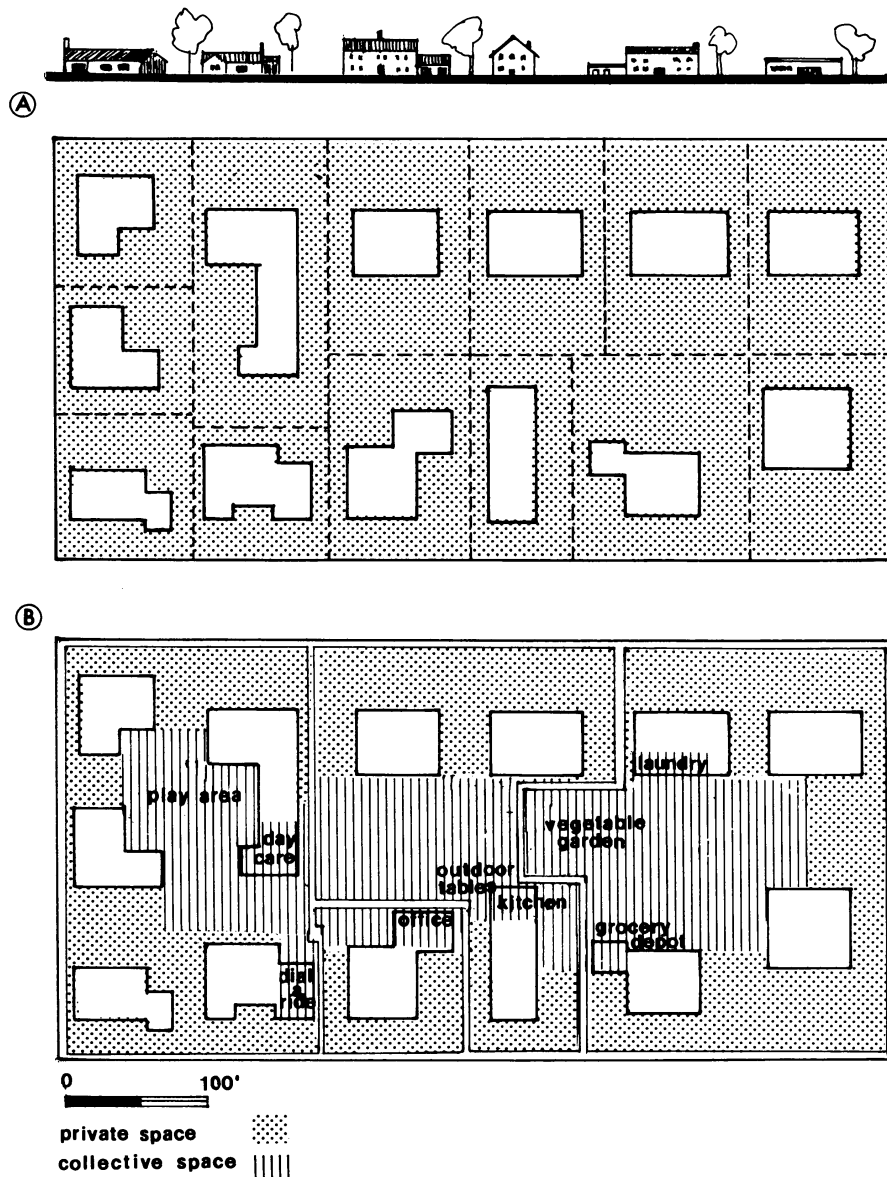


FIG. 5.—A, Suburban neighborhood, block plan. B, Proposed HOMES revitalization, same suburban block with new common space and facilities.

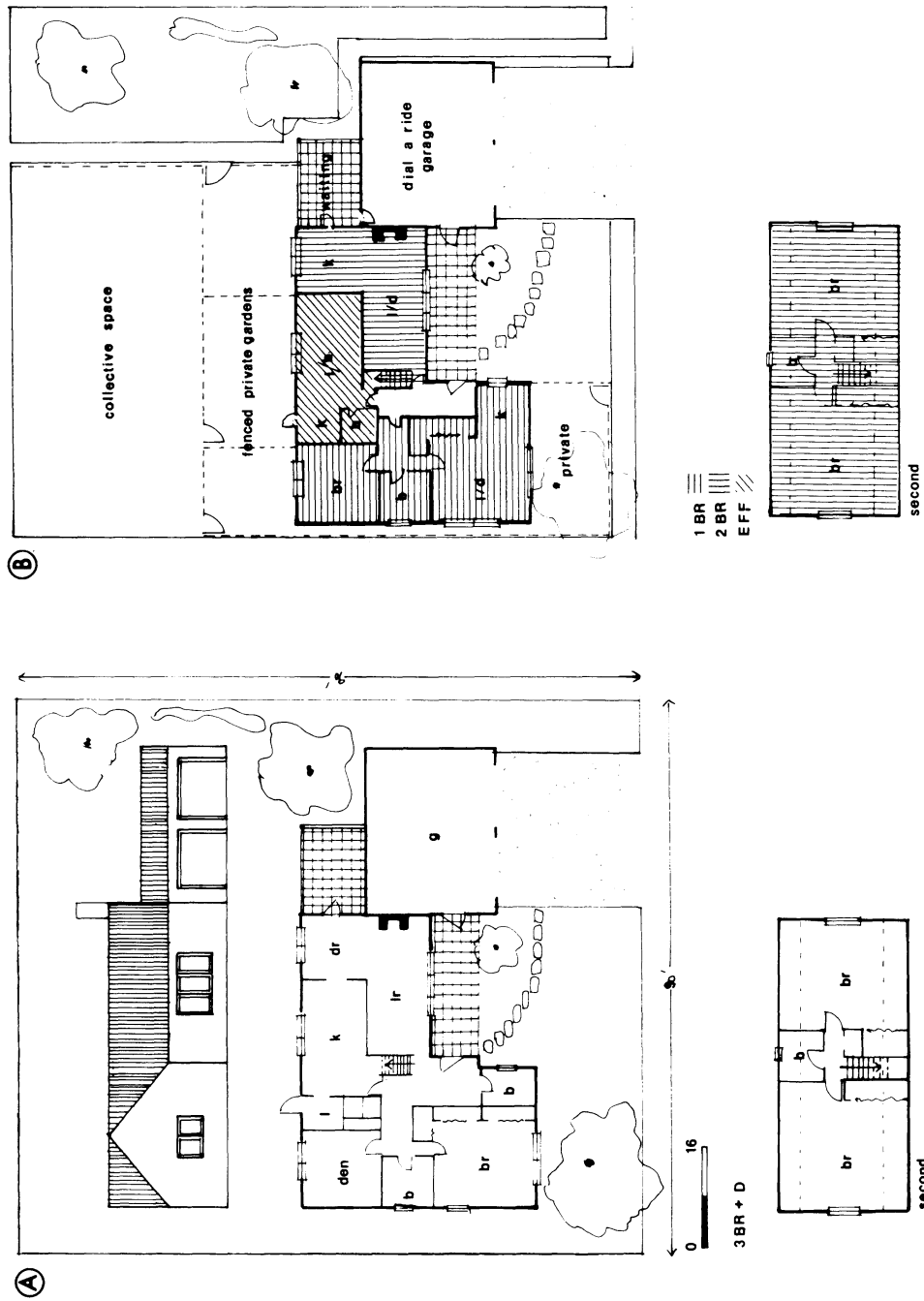


FIG. 6.—4, Suburban single-family house, plan, three bedrooms plus den. *B*, Proposed HOMES revitalization, same house converted to three units (two bedroom, one bedroom, and efficiency), plus dial-a-ride garage and collective outdoor space.

and den, two-and-a-half baths, laundry room, two porches, and a two-car garage, it was constructed in the 1950s at the height of the “feminine mystique.”

To convert this whole block and the housing on it to more efficient and sociable uses, one has to define a zone of greater activity at the heart of the block, taking a total of one and one half to two acres for collective use (fig. 5B). Essentially, this means turning the block inside out. The Radburn plan, developed by Henry Wright and Clarence Stein in the late 1920s, delineated this principle very clearly as correct land use in “the motor age,” with cars segregated from residents’ green spaces, especially spaces for children. In Radburn, New Jersey, and in the Baldwin Hills district of Los Angeles, California, Wright and Stein achieved remarkably luxurious results (at a density of about seven units to the acre) by this method, since their multiple-unit housing always bordered a lush parkland without any automobile traffic. The Baldwin Hills project demonstrates this success most dramatically, but a revitalized suburban block with lots as small as one-fourth acre can be reorganized to yield something of this same effect.²⁶ In this case, social amenities are added to aesthetic ones as the interior park is designed to accommodate community day care, a garden for growing vegetables, some picnic tables, a playground where swings and slides are grouped, a grocery depot connected to a larger neighborhood food cooperative, and a dial-a-ride garage.

Large single-family houses can be remodeled quite easily to become duplexes and triplexes, despite the “open plans” of the 1950s and 1960s popularized by many developers. The house in figure 6A becomes, in figure 6B, a triplex, with a two-bedroom unit (linked to a community garage); a one-bedroom unit; and an efficiency unit (for a single person or elderly person). All three units are shown with private enclosed gardens. The three units share a front porch and entry hall. There is still enough land to give about two-fifths of the original lot to the community. Particularly striking is the way in which existing spaces such as back porches or garages lend themselves to conversion to social areas or community services. Three former private garages out of thirteen might be given over to collective uses—one as a central office for the whole block, one as a grocery depot, and one as a dial-a-ride garage. Is it possible to have only twenty cars (in ten garages) and two vans for twenty-six units in a rehabilitated block? Assuming that some residents switch from outside employment to working within the block, and that for all residents, neighborhood shopping trips are cut in half by the presence of day care, groceries, laundry, and cooked food on the block, as well as aided by the presence of some new collective transportation, this might be done.

26. See also the successful experience of Zurich, described in Hans Wirz, “Back Yard Rehab: Urban Microcosm Rediscovered,” *Urban Innovation Abroad* 3 (July 1979): 2–3.

What about neighbors who are not interested in such a scheme? Depending on the configuration of lots, it is possible to begin such a plan with as few as three or four houses. In Berkeley, California, where neighbors on Derby Street joined their backyards and created a cooperative day-care center, one absentee landlord refused to join—his entire property is fenced in and the community space flows around it without difficulty. Of course, present zoning laws must be changed, or variances obtained, for the conversion of single-family houses into duplexes and triplexes and the introduction of any sort of commercial activities into a residential block. However, a community group that is able to organize or acquire at least five units could become a HUD housing cooperative, with a nonprofit corporation owning all land and with producers' cooperatives running the small community services. With a coherent plan for an entire block, variances could be obtained much more easily than on a lot-by-lot basis. One can also imagine organizations which run halfway houses—for ex-mental patients, or runaway teenagers, or battered women—integrating their activities into such a block plan, with an entire building for their activities. Such groups often find it difficult to achieve the supportive neighborhood context such a block organization would offer.

I believe that attacking the conventional division between public and private space should become a socialist and feminist priority in the 1980s. Women must transform the sexual division of domestic labor, the privatized economic basis of domestic work, and the spatial separation of homes and workplaces in the built environment if they are to be equal members of society. The experiments I propose are an attempt to unite the best features of past and present reforms in our own society and others, with some of the existing social services available in the United States today. I would like to see several demonstration HOMES begun, some involving new construction following the program I have laid out, others involving the rehabilitation of suburban blocks. If the first few experimental projects are successful, homemakers across the United States will want to obtain day-care, food, and laundry services at a reasonable price, as well as better wages, more flexible working conditions, and more suitable housing. When all homemakers recognize that they are struggling against both gender stereotypes and wage discrimination, when they see that social, economic, and environmental changes are necessary to overcome these conditions, they will no longer tolerate housing and cities, designed around the principles of another era, that proclaim that "a woman's place is in the home."

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