

Urban or Suburban?

A discussion held at the GSD in July 1996, with invited commentary*

Advocates of New Urbanism are helping achieve what once seemed impossible: making Americans question their devotion to conventional suburban development and their complacency about its attendant sprawl and lack of community. Powerful constituencies such as national home builder associations are paying attention to the movement, as are mayors, and even federal institutions such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The possibility that a cultural shift is underway only increases the need to distinguish "the hype from the hope." Insofar as the New Urbanists contribute to encouraging demand for alternatives to sprawl, they deserve our admiration. Insofar as their principles degenerate into ineffective panaceas and mere icons of community, or the fashion of neotraditional subdivisions produces yet more sprawl, then the New Urbanists warrant our ire. The following discussions address this most compelling recent phenomenon in American urban practice.

Alex Krieger, GSD Professor in Practice of Urban Design

* Burns, Carol, Robert Campbell, Andres Duany, Jarold Kayden and Alex Krieger (1997) "Urban or Suburban?" (Roundtable discussion), *Harvard Design Magazine* 1, Winter/Spring, pp. 47-61. Copyright © 1997 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

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COMMENTARY BY: Ellen Dunham-Jones, assistant professor of architecture, MIT; member of the Congress for New Urbanism; Gerald E. Frug, Samuel R. Rosenthal Professor of Law, Harvard Law School; author of, most recently, "The Geography of Community," *Stanford Law Review*; Alex Krieger (also a participant); William Morrish, program director and professor of architecture, Design Center for American Urban Landscape, University of Minnesota, author of *Planning to Stay*; John O. Norquist, Mayor, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Edward Robbins, lecturer in urban design, GSD; author of *Why Architects Draw*; Gretchen Schneider, MArch '97, GSD; Daniel Solomon, principal, Solomon Inc., San Francisco; author of *ReBuilding*; Gwendolyn Wright, professor of architecture, Columbia University; author of *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*

Saunders: Andres, how has your thinking about town planning changed lately, given that several of your projects have been built and have thus allowed you to test your ideas against reality?

Duany: I've been confirming the original definition of "neotraditionalism," which isn't well known. It was a term conceptualized by Stanford Research in 1985; that firm was commissioned by the Disney Company to explore and predict the ethos of the baby boomers for the next three decades; in their presentation they defined "neotraditionalism" as a non-ideological selection of what's considered to be the best for home environments. The researchers illustrated their study: they showed a photograph of a Victorian mantelpiece with a Braun alarm clock sitting on it. The neotraditionalists, they argued, might choose an old-fashioned room, but they wouldn't buy a Victorian clock that has to be wound and might not be accurate. They would choose an up-to-the-minute German clock. Moreover, the neotraditionalists would have modern plumbing and kitchens in their old houses. Now, a traditionalist would restore a Victorian bathroom, claw-foot tub and all, while a modernist would think it improper to live in a Victorian house. The point is that neotraditionalism tries to incorporate, pragmatically, whatever works best.

Wright: This use of the word "pragmatically" diminishes the complexity of the concept. Thoughtful pragmatists don't simply act; they choose where to experiment and where to acquiesce, they speculate about the relative effects of any strategy, and they acknowledge and try to mitigate the inevitability that some people will be hurt by an action. If a plan of action seems self-evident, take heed: beware

of generalizing too broadly on the basis of one's own ideas (or those of a client), of treating these priorities as if they were obvious and natural. Andres Duany can't escape ideology, any more than the rest of us.

We have come to understand the value of eschewing ideology – of not falling in love with this or that, but of trying to find the best solution or model and implementing it through design. I've also come to regard developers not as barbarians to be educated, but as people who may know a thing or two. That's a fundamental change in our outlook.

Krieger: I'd like to venture a criticism of the New Urbanism. It's not uncommon that as a movement emerges and matures, it becomes rigid, even strident, too sure of its propositions. Now specifically, that might lead one to argue that Seaside, your first major development, was articulated in too narrow a range, and thus as a model is neither flexible nor productive.

Duany: I think you may be right. But its focus makes it an effective polemical statement.

Krieger: The buildings at Seaside are one-to-four stories high, counting roofs and attics, and they're primarily single-family houses. The size of the lots is more or less uniform. Now compare that, for example, to Harvard Street here in Cambridge. It's parallel to and one block north of Massachusetts Avenue, the commercial spine of Cambridge, and within a half mile or so it contains a great variety of residential types: houses just as highly designed as those at Seaside, as well as red-brick apartment buildings and a few concrete towers from the 1960s. I think it's a marvelous street, in large part because of this diversity – a diversity that accommodates both big single-family

Victorians and apartment buildings rented mostly to students. But here's the thing: if you were to try to write a formula, a code, for it, it would sound like a disaster.

Duany: Again, I agree with you. You've raised several interesting issues. Let me begin to respond by emphasizing the difference between our intentions and our just not knowing enough about the process of town making. For example, one thing we didn't know early on, when designing Seaside, was that a height limit, when applied to the top of pitched roofs, would result in buildings "pavilionizing," or breaking down in scale. So, one part of our practice has involved mastering the instrument of coding.

Another aspect has involved being in constant friction with the real world — there is no way that our ideas can become rigid when we're constantly being challenged by developers, clients, users, etc. We often collaborate with other planners and architects who are not necessarily sympathetic to our ideas. Our charrettes are tremendously educational to us. Lately we've been inviting people we want to learn from, to keep enriching the intellectual gene pool of New Urbanism. I'm very aware of how common it is for design offices that were once wonderful and creative to become tired, stodgy, deadhead. In fact, we've purchased land and plan to build an academy next door to our office. In the evenings our staff will teach. This will invigorate our work.

Now, although it's important to be flexible, open to new ideas, it's also important, when you confront the world, to maintain principles that are inviolate — one thing you can learn from Le Corbusier is that to influence and persuade, you must be polemical. You can't convince people by equiv-

cating, by saying, "Well, on the one hand this, on the other that." You'll bore them, and they'll chew you up. As a polemicist, you have to clarify matters, as Corbu and Leon Krier did. And you have to attack. Whenever I'm invited to speak to the Urban Land Institute [ULI], I try to destabilize them with my certainty that they are wrong.

In important ways, the Congress for the New Urbanism [CNU] is modeled on CIAM. CIAM changed the world. Our ideology is different but our methodology is the same — congresses, charter, etc. And, like CIAM, we are selective — our membership is not open. You have to know what you're doing to be invited. We don't meet to teach, but to hone ideas. At the CNU we have fierce internal debates. The work of Calthorpe, Solomon, Moule, and Polyzoide might seem similar to outsiders, but we argue ferociously.

Levinson: What's the most trenchant critique that's come out of one of your internal debates recently?

Duany: Well, here's one: How do you define and draw the urban boundary? Is it drawn as a continuous circumventing line, as in Portland, or is it drawn according to the ideas of Benton MacKaye, where you protect what needs to be protected and let the city flow past? I would argue that the urban boundary drawn as an edge is essentially arbitrary; in this scenario the farmer within the boundary becomes a millionaire, and the farmer outside the limits stays a farmer. Such limits cannot hold, politically. But if you use Benton MacKaye's method — as you do here in the Boston region — you can protect in court that which is objectively defensible, such as a forest or a wetland; and the natural environment has some stability. But a lot of CNU members disagree with that approach.

Wright: Why is it only natural landscapes that merit such concerned intervention? Human ecologies must be protected, too. How can one identify and nurture, for instance, more and various modes of play and self-observation, of livelihood, or of responses to age?

Another debate within the CNU concerns style. Some felt we should state that neotraditionalism does *not* imply the use of vernacular styles. Actually, I think style is uncontrollable. In places like Toronto, for example, people select fairly modernist dwellings. In the US this is seldom the case. We pay attention to the public process. Then we use what we learn to write an urban code; a code is a neutral instrument that does not necessarily prescribe a popular style, but rather allows it.

Krieger: One of the interesting things about Harvard Street is that it's not coded.

Duany: Are you sure? I would think it's coded; almost everything is coded.

Krieger: If everything is coded, then nothing is coded. It's a question of definition.

Duany: By code I always mean the legal instrument, never the intellectual concept.

Kayden: It would be a disservice to claim that Duany Plater-Zyberk's codes resemble existing zoning codes, because one of your major contributions has been to undermine existing zoning. Your coding *is* different than the coding that exists in the Cambridge zoning ordinance and that determined much of Harvard Street.

Campbell: In this context it seems important to remember that the streets of Cambridge have developed over centuries and are the result of serial coding.

Duany: I wish I knew Harvard Street because I could probably give you six rules that would result in a similar street. You can code anything.

Campbell: Yes, but you've made two different statements. One is that you could code anything and the other that everything is coded.

Kayden: And you've made a much more substantive, normative statement about coding: you've converted the word "zoning" into a bad word, as opposed to a neutral one.

Duany: That was Krier's argument. To him zoning means the separation of uses.

Kayden: I agree that zoning is theoretically a neutral instrument; it's whatever we want it to be. You have, however, looked empirically at zoning, particularly in the suburbs, and you've said, "Shame on you, we need to change this." So "zoning" came to be seen as the culprit in the suburbs.

Duany: Right. But don't give us personally too much credit. The New Urbanism is a movement. Lizz [Plater-Zyberk] and I would argue that Krier clarified our understanding of zoning, and that, while I talk about it more than most, there are dozens of people doing this work.

Kayden: One of the great current debates in law, and zoning in particular, is the debate between present rules and the exercise of discretion on a case-by-case basis, perhaps guided by some rules. The Town and Country Planning Act, Great Britain's contribution to the world of planning, has operated to a large degree on the basis of discretion, whereas the German and then the American zoning system have tended to operate on the basis of present rules that can be read by everybody and are read especially by developers who, as a result of these rules, have the

predictability and stability that they claim they want. Do you still see value in preset rules?

Duany: That's an ongoing debate. Will good architecture result from preset rules, or do such rules actually harm the work of creative architects such as Aldo Rossi, Richard Meier, etc.? For example, Seaside was built according to one of the most liberal architectural codes we've written, because [developer] Robert Davis has a sophisticated eye and knows how to use a discretionary code. Now, in other places, we've written much stricter codes because we didn't have the same confidence. We adjust the code to the situation.

Kayden: What if the developer is the public sector?

Duany: Well, you cannot fix the public sector permanently - the law can always be voted in and out of effect. We try to make codes for the public sector resistant to political change, by making them weaker, less prescriptive. We have lower expectations for public-sector architecture.

Burns: In what ways do you private and public codes differ? Is the street configuration changed, or the coding of individual buildings, or the quality of the architecture *per se*?

Duany: The code for Seaside is strong typologically and weak architecturally; most people don't realize that. The architectural code is very informal, having to do with the use of real materials, minimum sizes for the rafters, and so on. Seaside looks the way it does largely because individual residents have commissioned certain styles. There are some modernist buildings at Seaside - but they're not very popular. In our experience, what happens when you free up the architectural code is that people tend to choose vernacular architecture. After Seaside,

we learned to code more precisely, both typologically and architecturally; but the prescriptions of a code are always adjustable. Some of our latest codes, for example, deal with frontage only; in these, we say very little about the buildings, other than the ways they perform relative to the street. By the way, we have found that there are only seven frontages in the world: seven ways that a building can engage the street.

One important way to ensure an appropriate measure of creativity is to allow civic buildings to remain wholly uncoded. We would not code a campus, a church, a city hall. The dialectic of urbanism is that private buildings are to be silent and behave coherently to create public spaces, whereas the civic buildings are to freely embody the aspirations of the society and of the artists who create them. Why should the work of architects like Richard Meier be coded? His architecture is suitable for civic buildings; but, if he wants to do a house, he has to behave, to get along with his neighbors.

Krieger: Of course, the irony here is that many would say that Meier's greatest buildings are private houses.

Kayden: One could also argue that there is a value to individualism in the design of houses, in expressing oneself through one's house.

Wright: We can't have it both ways. Our justified praise for the elegantly distinctive individualism of a Meier house is directly related to our usual critique of the excessive, often jarring gestures of individualism along many suburban streets. We can't expect people to defer willingly to our judgment about which architects (and which clients) should be allowed creative license and which should be content to fashion an anonymous background. As Duany rightly points out, even a great architect has to defer somewhat to the

world beyond his or her own design. It's the relationship between the parts and the whole that needs oversight and maintenance, as much as visual cohesion *per se*.

A caveat, however, about controls. For the past century, at least, the most common regulations in American residential neighborhoods have involved restrictive covenants; and now there have developed more devious systems to exclude those people considered "undesirable" and to outlaw those activities deemed "deviant" (such as creating an independent home office or workshop, or renting out a room). As we all know, such paranoid desire for control has lately only intensified and extended. The New Urbanists must acknowledge the subtext of conformity and hostility that usually underlies any kind of code or guideline. Of course, this isn't to say that throwing away controls releases us from these problems.

Duany: Let me explain. In our projects we enable the owners to choose their own designer. Neotraditional design is not about selling a whole sector to a single developer but about dividing up the land so that someone can buy a small portion and control it.

It's interesting — builders have learned that people want their private houses to fit in. If only one house on the street has a porch, and the others don't, the house with the porch won't sell. The authentic personal expression in an American house currently takes place in the backyard. One problem with Seaside, in this regard, is that we made the backyards public, visually. One of the social experiments of Seaside was to create a network of paths that run by the backs of the houses; this was intended to encourage people to use their front porches. Well, this is exactly what happened, and the backyards are underused. But that's not fair, because as a result residents have no

truly private outdoor places. Urbanism requires the creation of both community and privacy. In our later projects, such as Windsor, we were obsessive about private backyards; if you want to raise chickens out back, that's fine.

Kayden: Andres, do you see a distinction between government or the public sector adopting such rules and a private developer being converted to New Urbanism and adopting these rules in a private setting?

Duany: Typically, our initial work is for a private developer. We write a code for the new neighborhood or village. Often, we are subsequently asked to rewrite the existing code for the municipality.

Kayden: But it's one thing to change the law to respond to demands from customers represented by a developer and quite another for government to require in advance that people act in a certain way.

Duany: Government is always weaker than the private sector. When you buy into a private development, the code is referenced in the purchase agreement, and you contract to act in accordance. So private coding can be stronger.

Krieger: I'd like to return to something Andres said that seemed stunning — coding the private, not the public, sector. Historically, however, the public realm, including its civic monuments, has been the most tightly controlled, usually through an act of authority; and private development, including where people live, has been the least controlled.

Duany: I was imprecise: what I meant is that we control the general spatial and functional definition of the public realm but allow the specialized elements within it to be determined more freely. For example, we control the making of the street and the square,

but not the expression of the civic buildings within the square or the light standards along the streets.

Krieger: Another of your statements struck me strongly as well, because it seemed so refreshing – I refer to your comment that the aesthetic debate is trivial. I would guess that a lot of people assume that aesthetics are central to New Urbanism.

Duany: It definitely is to some members; but we adjust the level of control in regard to the desired degree of harmony. The citizens usually decide the style. This is something that we usually offer potential residents by showing them images of different scenarios. I may show them slides, for example, of buildings that create a very harmonious whole, such as the Rue de Rivoli. Few Americans like that model. We show them other choices with strategic adjustments such as mandatory balcony lines, or specific percentages of solid to void, or vertically proportioned openings, or a set range of colors. Rules can create an urbanism, and we are concerned with that level of design rather than with the issue of whether the style is Victorian or neo-Modern. But when you give Americans choices, they usually respond with the same answer: vernacular. If you want to impose a modernist downtown, you really have to push them that way, because there's a strong preference for traditional architecture. It's seen as "normal" or "neutral."

Campbell: When you are criticized about Kentlands, you often argue that the criticisms are premature because the design will mature in the fullness of time. But nothing that you've said here so far has anything to do with the fullness of time. What you've been saying is, "Here it is, any student can do it, boom, let's go."

Duany: Well, first, much of the criticism about Kentlands concerns the town center – people say that it's not built. But I know that it is in the pipeline; the town center will be built, with a vengeance. But that's not the question you're asking.

Campbell: The question is: how are your towns going to change over the next half century?

Duany: I'll tell you how Kentlands was designed. We played a sort of game. There were five existing farm buildings, and each designer sequentially added buildings and spaces. In a sense, we were trying to compress history: to achieve in a short time what would happen over a longer period. Today this method is part of our process. The way we design is that Lizz or I do the parti, very crudely; we then hand it to the first designer, who has it for two hours before handing it over to the next designer, and so forth.

Burns: That's Surrealist methodology.

Wright: How fascinating that both New Urbanists and poststructuralists are trying to build contingency, plurality, and experimentation into the process of design! There may be the possibility of a larger architectural culture after all.

Duany: In the meantime, the other designers are running around, looking at the site, studying the architectural or urban history of the region, etc. We sequentially hand over the design not only to architects but also to landscape architects, engineers, and so on. You can see this in Kentlands. Kentlands has authentic variety, built-in disjunctions and inconsistencies. That's important. Our towns plans have a history, they're not finite designed places – mistakes are inscribed and, of

course, they continue to accrue as the towns are built out.

Campbell: I'd like to put Kentlands in the framework of the larger issue of settlement patterns over time. Kentlands is often criticized as another stop on the highway, another suburb for commuters. At the same time, I suspect we're entering an era during which half the population will move to Montana and the other half will move downtown, because those are the two best places to live, and new communications technology lets you live anywhere. So what happens to the suburbs? Given this larger framework of settlement patterns, what happens to Kentlands?

Duany: Kentlands will be resilient. It was designed to comprise a balance of offices and shops as well as dwellings. The problem is that the office market was overbuilt at the time, and is still soft, so Kentlands won't have many offices. But, serendipitously, a new settlement that we are now designing on adjacent land, the former site of the National Geographic Society, will include offices. Also, Kentlands will contain many more live-work units than we originally envisioned. Places like Kentlands, with their small-scale platting and their variety of dwellings and flexible uses, can evolve organically. They will survive. The standard suburban monoculture is vulnerable to the forces that you refer to.

Saunders: Is it ever possible to *create* community? Can one make "instant" towns or cities with any organic integrity?

Duany: American towns are all instant. Look at the cities of the Midwest and West – all instant. American urbanism is designed quickly and built quickly.

Krieger: You're right about American towns. But one major difference is that

when Guthrie, Oklahoma – to give just one example – was designed in three days, it was the only town within a radius of about 100 miles. Therefore it became a real town. Today, your Kentlands is next to someone else's Windsor and down the road from yet someone else's Seaside. Thus they all need to be interactive; it's a very different situation to make a town today than it was a century ago. The townspeople of Guthrie had nowhere to shop but in the stores of Guthrie. The citizens of Kentlands can choose from any number of suburban DC malls. This is an important issue – it's not just about shopping *per se*, but about behavioral patterns. Can the way of life of Kentlands' residents really be defined as "urban"?

Duany: We asked that question of an anthropologist, Edward LiPuma, of the University of Miami, an expert on suburbia. We showed him what we were doing, explained our goals, and asked: will this work? He responded that it will work, but it will take a generation, which he defined as nineteen years.

In his view, there is an immature stage in new towns. It takes time, he said, to find the right mix, for the teenagers to find their hangouts, for the right shops to move in, for the jobs to appear so that people look for dwellings near their work, etc.

Wright: Whether it's Sigfried Giedion or Alexander Garvin, architects too easily use history and social science to legitimate their own preferences, rather than to challenge and expand their ideas. I'd like to evoke the historian and political scientist Charles Beard, who was deeply involved in urban planning in New York and Tokyo in the 1920s. His proposals always acknowledged contingency and provisionality. "Will it work?" has to be expanded, he contended, to ask "Whom will it

work for? Who will be damaged? Who decides? Who doesn't have a voice? What haven't I thought about? What am I blocking out of my vision?"

Burns: I'd like to move from time to scale. One thing that any urbanism must do is to acknowledge several scales at once – the scale of the street, the neighborhood, the town, the city. These new greenfield suburban towns are no-brainers, in a sense; you could design many variations that would be successful by various criteria. To me, the potential interest of New Urbanism is how it confronts more difficult problems – for instance, inner-city sites. But I'd like you to address this issue of moving across scales, because it seems New Urbanism works very well up to the scale of the town, but not beyond that. So to take up the issue Alex raised – what kind of urbanism happens when you have Kentlands next to Windsor next to Seaside? Is that the image of the city that you want to be making as a city, not a town?

Solomon: Why do Seaside and Kentlands assert themselves in this conversation like toy punching bags that keep popping up again after you knock them down? TNDs, Kentlands, and Seaside are huge contributions, to be sure, but what do we have to do to broaden the discourse? What about other New Urbanist projects like those in Cleveland, Portland, San José? What about the repair of Boston, Seattle, San Francisco? What about the CNU initiatives with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development? What about the Department of Transportation? Wake up, everybody. Something bigger is going on.

Duany: That's a very interesting question to which there's a very precise answer. The density of modern urban design is controlled by parking. That's

important to understand. Density is parking, parking is density, parking is profits, parking is power: everything is controlled by parking. And when you start designing, you find that sixteen units per acre is the highest density that works with parking. Beyond that you have to use heroic measures to accommodate parking.

Solomon: Our San Francisco projects are 40 to 55 dwelling units/acre, with no heroic measures.

Burns: Such as underground or structured parking?

Duany: Yes. Now, this creates an interesting situation. At sixteen units per acre, everybody lives in townhouses, which results in a social monoculture. Townhouses are important, but so are other housing types. You need mansions, because the individuals who are likely to support the necessary civic buildings are wealthy and will want big houses. And once you start to include the standard 50, 70, 100, 120-foot lots to balance the society, density becomes eight units to the gross acre. Then there are the parks and the schools to fold in, lowering it still more. Beyond this you ratchet up in one leap to a metropolitan condition such as Boston, San Francisco, or Manhattan, where transit truly works and density is unlimited.

Solomon: San Francisco depends on cars, and most people drive.

Krieger: I would still argue, though, that the real issue is whether you – or any of us – can persuade Americans to accept denser housing patterns; because even sixteen units per acre will not support an effective system of mass transport.

Duany: According to Peter Calthorpe it will.

Krieger: Calthorpe's assertion remains to be proven. So how do you respond to those who say that you're perpetuating a low-density, car-dependent, *suburban* condition, albeit through design? Another way to put it is to ask whether the New Urbanism is not, in fact, the New Suburbanism. You refer to urban models in your speeches, but your projects do not reproduce the urbanity of, say, Boston or Providence. Are you not perpetuating suburbia, perhaps even making it more palatable, through better designs, for a new generation of homeowners?

Duany: You've asked a very complex question. What would happen if, let's say, Gaithersburg [the municipality in which Kentlands is located] were uniformly coded with a TND [Traditional Neighborhood Development] ordinance? There would then be a series of neighborhoods like Kentlands next to each other, and neighborhoods of that density make a town, not a city like Boston or Providence, but a good town like Alexandria, Virginia, or Annapolis, Maryland. In fact, Kentlands is much denser than many respectable American towns; it has many apartment buildings. Actually, what would result is a structure like that in Clarence Perry's 1929 diagram of the Neighborhood Unit. This differs from suburbia; this model attempts to locally balance and "micro-mesh" various uses, such as housing, workplaces, shops, schools, etc. Suburbia might be *statistically* identical to New Urbanist towns, but its form consists of discrete shopping centers, office parks, and housing subdivisions which, in fact, are segregated by income in an absolute way. A place like Kentlands, in contrast, mixes income groups radically. In a single

block there's a variety of housing, from rental apartments to townhouses; in another area there are contiguous apartments, townhouses, and expensive single family houses. The ULI is astounded by this mixing of housing types. "How did you do it?" they asked. And I responded, "It wasn't an issue because the architectural vernacular of all the parts, being identical, acts as a kind of camouflage."

Wright: Does a mixture of architectural types and sizes guarantee the social diversity and interchanges we associate with urban life? Does this approach, in making a planned neighborhood more visually enticing, make it more expensive, and thus less affordable to a wide range of people, and hence less urban? That said, DPZ's commitment to variety is a step in the right direction. Like all of us, they need to find incentives and strategies to make the sociopolitical reality of urban diversity coalesce with the architectural representation of such diversity.

Here's a paradox: the architectural world thinks that all this is conservative; the development industry thinks it is radical to the danger point, courting the bankruptcy of the developer, and even endangering their entire industry. These are the two worlds and the two critiques that we are straddling. And – just for the record – the development world interests me much more than the architectural world.

Burns: You may be setting up polarities that do not in fact exist. Many of us here are also very interested in both worlds.

Duany: Point taken. But let me explain how we create these mixed-income communities, because it relates back to style. Empirically, we have found that there are two ways to convince developers to build – and people to

live in — these intensely variegated new towns. One way is to code unit type — as we did at Seaside. At Seaside, the same unit types face each other across the street; there's an avenue of mansions, another of townhouses. People respond very strongly to their street frontage; what happens in the back can be another world as far as they're concerned. You can observe this phenomenon in aerial photographs everywhere. We use this method with the more conservative developers.

At Kentlands, we did something different: the platting of lots there is flexible, but the architectural language is coded. The great unifier is style. There might be a townhouse next to an apartment building, but the buildings are all brick, for instance, with vertically proportioned openings and shingled, pitched roofs. So mixing people is not an issue because the high-density housing looks like the low-density housing. This is a powerful tool. And what's more, it can integrate uses: offices, shops, and housing. If you control the look of buildings, everything is compatible. In this sense I think a common language is important. It can be a great instrument. If you don't code style — if you free up the architect to do an office building in glass and steel — then the whole thing, in a sense, explodes, and people can't stand being next to that which looks different.

Solomon: A very interesting idea far more easily realized along the East Coast, with its reasonably intact 300-year-old building traditions, than in the American West, where vernacular building traditions are far more deeply buried by debased modernism and developer kitsch.

Kayden: But there's distinction between what people say they want and what people really use.

Krieger: I agree; there's a difference between behavior and expression of desire. I happen to live within a short walk of a corner store; I'm very glad it's there, but if the proprietor depended upon the frequency with which I shop in his store, he wouldn't prosper. Most of the time I find it easier to shop at another store near where I'm working, or to buy in quantity at big supermarkets where the prices are lower.

Duany: Yes, but you may appreciate that store when you are old, and your children will probably use it often. I'd like to reemphasize the difficulty of analyzing new towns. We are looking at immature communities; they are not yet in balance and shouldn't be judged in the same way one would judge older places. Conversely, the problem with studying mature communities is that they're full of tourists who distort the statistics. There's such a scarcity of decent urbanism in this country that good cities are tourist attractions.

Burns: But I'd like to look again at this issue of market research. There's a study of worker productivity in which the workplace was first painted one color and productivity improved; then it was painted another color and productivity again improved. Then it was painted yet again, and productivity still increased. This continued for awhile, until researchers figured out that the key was not the color—

Duany: It was the change.

Burns: Yes; the workers were responding to the fact that their environment was being attended to.

Campbell: That raises the question of how one sustains a sense of attention to the environment.

Kayden: Or how one knows what in fact affects behavior.

Krieger: And, of course, behavior is not always predictable. We all under-

stand the evils of high rise housing projects, and yet some of the most expensive real estate in the world is in high-rise buildings. So the human response to form is not constant.

Duany: Generally that's true; but it is predictable by other measures – age, class, region, ethnic group, etc. This is what sophisticated marketing studies determine.

Levinson: We could probably extend this idea to what you were talking about earlier, to the use of style as a unifier in New Urbanism. It occurs to me that many Americans who were raised in the “traditional” suburbs of the 1950s – in stylistically unified and conformist environments – reacted strongly against all that unity, which some saw as stultifying, and got the hell out. So I'm wondering whether all these studies that measure and predict human behavior are often too narrow in scope, too unaware of the range of human response to situations, of the fact, for instance, that what one generation embraces another generation rejects.

Duany: I see your point. But consider the context of postwar suburban development: typically one office or one developer designed an area of a great size. There's less variety than there would be if every building were designed by a different architect, which is what we propose as an ideal. There's infinitely more variety in the towns we design than in conventional suburbia. We divide the entire site into lots, and do not permit the same builder to build whole sectors, which, by the way, is a tremendous pain. You have to look at all this in the context of current practice, and, in that context, the variety of the New Urbanism is radical.

Krieger: What Nancy said reminded me of another critique of your work

that has lately emerged. In *Architecture*, Heidi Landecker wrote about her recent tour through half a dozen or so of the most progressive New Urbanist communities; she was struck by a sense of great homogeneity of appearance, scale, demographics, and observable activity at particular moments. She noted a general absence of public space and commercial activities. In short, she described these places as not all that radically different from older suburbs; and she suggests that they are producing, or maybe reinforcing, a new kind of conformity. She and others have surmised that these places foster a sense of security in a world that these days feels insecure, and they grant that this is comforting, although perhaps not appropriate or even desirable.

Campbell: It seems inevitable that any place created all at once will have a certain homogeneity.

Krieger: That wasn't Landecker's point, exactly. She was saying that the new towns in California looked, behaved, and felt like the ones in Massachusetts or Virginia and that they were populated by the same rather narrow spectrum of the population. Maybe she's a poor observer.

Duany: No, she's not necessarily a poor observer. There are many towns being built with picket fences and so forth that are not TNDs. You should see *Builder Magazine* this week. The cover story is all about supposedly New Urbanist towns, but not one is an authentic TND. They're all single-use communities. There's a lot of fake stuff out there, and a lot of writers can't tell the difference. This is now the great vulnerability of the movement.

Krieger: You've noted this often over the years, which raises the question: how do you avoid being co-opted?

Duany: Well, that's a problem.

Kayden: Andres, you said earlier that these towns are propositions. You quoted an anthropologist who suggested that they would require a generation nineteen years to mature. If we were sitting around this table nineteen years from now, and I asked you to cite three key improvements in human behavior that have made American society better and that result from New Urbanism, what would those three be?

Duany: First, I think the life of children will be richer. I think a generation of children will benefit from not growing up in cul-de-sacs, but in a network of streets providing access to parks, schools, stores, and the like. With a network of streets, kids can have the run of the entire neighborhood. Have you ever taken a kid who grew up in West Palm Beach County to Paris? Well, I took students to Paris a few years ago, and they found it scary. I had to say, "It's okay, you can go here, you can go out at night. Yes, I know it's dirty, but go ahead, it's all right." They were uneasy in Paris because they had grown up in an environment that was "perfect"; they had been vaccinated against urbanism. I don't believe that at this moment there's one piece of paper on a lawn anywhere in West Palm Beach County. It's maintained perfectly – and privately.

Wright: But aren't you making perfect places, or as close an approximation as possible? Isn't there a risk of hegemonic control, together with limited options outside that system? Is Kentlands a neotraditional Singapore?

Campbell: I had a similar experience when I brought a group of architecture students, most about thirty years old, from Tampa up to Boston. They stayed in Kenmore Square, and we walked

from there to Newbury Street; and it became clear to me that they'd seen places like this in movies – they'd seen sidewalk cafés and people strolling the streets and looking in shop windows – but didn't realize that such places existed outside the media. They couldn't believe it.

Duany: It's amazing, isn't it? If it were not for Hollywood and even for Disney, many Americans simply wouldn't know about street life.

The second improvement that I believe the New Urbanism will help bring about is that it will be possible to age in place in these communities. They will be viable places in which to live when you lose your ability to drive, when you become fearful of driving at night or in the snow. Too often this makes people move into retirement communities. But New Urbanist towns are designed to make pedestrian mobility possible.

Levinson: The changes you've described would certainly be beneficial. But we're still a long way from the dirt and diversity of Paris.

Krieger: Robert, didn't you once describe Quincy Market as "a halfway house for disenfranchised suburbanites."

Campbell: "Recovering suburbanites" was the actual phrase—

Krieger: Andres, are Kentlands and other New Urbanist developments halfway houses for recovering suburbanites? Halfway there on the road toward a real recovery of urbanism, an urbanism that these places do not yet represent, because of the factors we've already mentioned?

Norquist: New Urbanism has appeal across the political spectrum, not just to environmentalists and neighborhood activists on the left. CNU has associations with

conservative Paul Weyrich, who has written on the benefits of transit and TND to the construction of a moral society. The conservative American Enterprise Institute has published Andres Duany's thoughts.

Duany: That's a good question. The first thing to say is that not all of our projects are the same. Windsor is one thing, Kentlands another, and so on.

Campbell: For what it is, Windsor seems to me remarkably successful.

Duany: Windsor is about architecture – about *sobriety* in architecture; it's about sweating off the vulgarity that has taken over so much Florida architecture. It is in some ways a perfect place. Kentlands, on the other hand, is an extraordinarily imperfect place. Every time I visit I'm astonished at how like a real place it looks because of its imperfect character. Many of our projects are formally resolved to a high degree. For various reasons, though, Kentlands is almost a mess. But when I walk along its paths that don't always line up and that are made of asphalt, I say, "This is like Pittsburgh! This is great!" In fact, I would bet that in nineteen years, people won't realize that it was a planned community.

Campbell: Of course, that's the fate of many planned communities. What's the third answer to Jerold's question?

Kayden: Well, it obviously will have to do with advantages for the middle-aged – you've already covered children and the elderly.

Duany: Here's an example. My secretary lives in Kentlands, close to our office there. She's a divorcee who owns one car; she could not easily live in conventional suburbia because she has a daughter who also needs the car. So there's an instance of one person whose daily life has been positively affected by these places – and there

will be many such cases. To be relieved of the *need* to own more than one car – that's a great thing. According to *USA Today*, it costs \$6,400 a year to own a car. So if you figure that an extra \$6,000 per year, at a 10 per cent mortgage rate, translates into \$60,000 of housing purchase capability, this gives people the ability to improve their living situations enormously.

Levinson: So a couple living in a TND would need only one car?

Duany: It would be easier there than elsewhere. You can argue that their teenager won't need a car at all.

Kayden: I think that would have to be proved, and one would want to see the studies you cite.

Duany: Just wait nineteen years. There are fourteen years to go for Kentlands and I am confident there will be substantial statistical differences between Kentlands and more traditional developments.

Campbell: I think Andres has made a very valuable argument, without even discussing all the codes, roads, maintenance, and so on.

Burns: Income mixing is one of the more interesting aspects of New Urbanism. Income mixing in the suburbs has been rare, and it relates to an issue we have not yet raised. The New Urbanism, as it's matured, has managed to align a number of disparate groups – people who are interested in public housing, historic preservationists, environmentalists, interests that do not have much obviously in common. It's intriguing that each group sees New Urbanism as a way to address its own very specific issues. Different people have looked at these "traditional" environments and seen something in them that relates to their concerns. Among other things, this is an incredible testament to the power of the built

environment to stimulate ways to think.

Duany: The CNU thinks of New Urbanism as a solution to *many* problems. In fact, we are soon going to ally the CNU South with a mature environmental organization, the Southern Environmental Law Center. We plan to bring together the groups and train them to represent each other's concerns.

Levinson: Will the CNU be trained by the environmentalists as well as vice versa?

Duany: Yes. We will theoretically be able to represent our agendas interchangeably, not as we do now, occasionally and tentatively, but completely and with full understanding. Can you imagine the power of such an alliance?

Burns: I would extend this idea of bringing together different worlds to the relationship between academia and practice: academics and practitioners are not in opposing worlds. Both realms can benefit from the other. I would even suggest that as New Urbanism develops, it could be less about salesmanship and could actually contribute to the *sad state of architectural theory* as it exists today, especially with respect to its own methodology. New Urbanism works in modes that are socially empirical, self-conscious in terms of discipline, and engaged in dialogue with others. These methodologies of bridging distinct realms could help foster a contribution to theory in architecture.

Duany: About salesmanship – I've been reading Daniel Boorstin's history of this country. He makes it clear that America was built on boosterism. The West could not have been colonized without outrageous boosterism. Boosterism supports our performance as a

movement – not just mine, which is perhaps an extreme version. We try to replicate the American style of getting things done quickly and effectively. I was reading Boorstin and thought, "This is how it was done back then. How it was always done. This is how Kansas City came to be."

I'd like to tell you about an analogy made by Christopher Alexander. Years ago he wanted to study the TND Ordinance; he said that if it did what we said it did, then it was a great thing. I replied that I didn't think it was as great as *A Pattern Language*. He then suggested that both the TND and *A Pattern Language* were like appliances needing power – and while his appliance might be better in an absolute way, our appliance is more practical because it plugs into the existing power grid.

We are constantly working on how this appliance can be plugged into the existing power grids. The appliance, the New Urbanism, is a timeless one, but it is necessary to design a variety of plugs.

Kayden: Andres, I want to ask you about an issue Carol raised, that of *income mixing*. Some people who've studied the field have looked at the numbers and claimed that there really isn't that much income mixing in New Urbanist communities. Could you describe, for example, what exactly is the percentage mixing of incomes based on constructed housing in Kentlands?

Duany: My secretary's townhouse sold for \$160,000 next to a house that sold for \$470,000 with an outbuilding that rents for \$595 per month. There are also hundreds of rental apartments nearby. That's a very radical mix of incomes. In a nearby project, called Windcrest, there's actually subsidized housing right next to \$280,000 houses.

Now the problem is this: I don't believe that you can construct a dwelling on a lot in the Washington area to sell for less than \$150,000. That's the base price, which we can't control. Given that, one of the most honorable things about Kentlands, in my view, is that it is as mixed as possible. What more can you ask than to have rental apartments, townhouses, and mansions all next to each other?

Saunders: But you've also acknowledged that the class differences are diminishing as Kentlands has become known as a desirable place to live.

Duany: Yes. The rents are rising; house prices are rising. There are two possible ways to counteract this. One is to build enough great places so that the market doesn't overheat. The other solution – which is not serious – is to build places that do not connect with the popular taste culture. For example, Steven Holl's building at Seaside hasn't gone up in price at all; it is not viewed as desirable.

Burns: What an idea – maintaining long-term affordability through unpopular aesthetics!

Duany: Steven Holl, who is a friend, might see this is as an honorable contribution. He might argue that architecture must make its own culture.

Krieger: Andres, you tend to answer us primarily with assertions, and we all want to believe those assertions. But assertions are not proofs. It still remains to be observed and proved through statistics and experience whether all that you claim will actually come to be.

I'd like to raise again the issue of whether the New Urbanist pattern is, in certain ways, a good pattern – the issue of whether it will result in as much redundant peripheral development as “traditional” postwar subur-

ban development has produced. There's a great risk of being co-opted, I think; and for every Kentlands, there are still dozens and dozens of under-used, dilapidated, existing neighborhoods that could be revitalized – and that already have many of the urban attributes that you try to create at great effort and expense. Furthermore, this new peripheral development will further drain the vitality of struggling urban neighborhoods.

Norquist: I disagree. The urban form being revived in suburban New Urbanist design revalidates existing urban development. Each year that sprawl development is the only new development, the urban forms of older cities like Boston, St. Louis, and Milwaukee become a smaller proportion of total development.

For example, streets with sidewalks decline as a proportion of total streets. Apartments above shops have not only declined proportionally, but have become an historic relic, reproduced only as a novelty at Disney World and Disneyland.

Genuine traditional neighborhood development, built on the metro edge, awakens consumer taste for urban forms already existing in cities. As mayor of a 150-year-old city, I prefer suburban development that mirrors the design of my city to suburban development that is alien to what we have in Milwaukee. If New Urbanism catches on in suburbs, people might be more likely to choose the real thing in Milwaukee.

Kayden: What Alex is asking relates to the argument Andres raised earlier: the debate in the CNU about urban boundaries and whether there should be set boundaries or, as Benton MacKaye advocated, more fluid and flexible limits that allow precious resources to be protected. One could make the argument that New Urbanism could use its influence and power to create public policy

that would intervene in the marketplace and force development to occur in cities, in the places where poor people actually live and which are genuinely diverse, places where the middle class is now reluctant to live. In this context the debate about boundaries becomes very significant; perhaps the Benton MacKaye approach would allow New Urbanism to exist in places like Kentlands, whereas the urban growth boundaries approach would to some extent stifle the Kentlands pattern.

Krieger: And to this argument we could add that New Urbanism has perhaps provided the middle classes with a politically correct incentive to abandon the city.

Duany: The first thing to say is that the New Urbanism has a dual purpose. Our skills and energy are being devoted equally to development in suburbia and in the inner city. Over one-third of our firm's projects are plans for existing fabric. To answer Jerold: yes, the urban growth boundary model would have the positive effect of stifling places like Kentlands. It would tend to compress development.

The problems of the urban growth boundary are, first, it needs the secondary structure of the neighborhood within its bounds if it is not to become just sprawl; second, it seems to me politically unsustainable. There has never been an urban growth boundary that has held, not even Portland's. And the reason for this is simple: such boundaries are arbitrary. What happens is that a city draws an arbitrary line — and there is inevitably an economic differential between inside and outside, and a democratic system cannot sustain the pressure of that differential. You cannot have many thousands of dollars per acre one place, and just beyond virtually no value. It is not organic.

Burns: It's not democracy that prevents this; it's the capital markets.

Duany: A good point; you're right.

Kayden: Actually though, such differences do exist in many places — they happen through zoning regulations. Zoning has made some land valuable; it's also prevented some people from making millions from their land.

Duany: But I would argue that such situations are not sustainable—

Krieger: Andres is right; no such boundary conditions have withstood long-term pressures from the market.

Kayden: Well, there's a debate about that, and I think the record is mixed. And, after all, New Urbanism itself is evidence that the conventional wisdom can be disproved. Five years ago people were saying your developments would never succeed.

Duany: But, you see, we are really not interested in expending a huge amount of political capital on something that isn't going to work. We don't want to create a place that's based on laws that would only hold for one political generation. I believe that the only way to develop places is to acknowledge that growth will occur and to give it a healthy pattern.

Kayden: So that's your pragmatic political judgment?

Duany: Yes, but it is not the position of the CNU, which is debating this issue.

Kayden: Were it not your pragmatic political judgment, would you think differently?

Duany: Lizz and I spend time studying plans that have failed. We have learned a lot; we've learned that there's too much failure in planning. And I'm not interested in participating in that tradition even though it includes the work of such distinguished thinkers as Lewis Mumford and John Nolen.

Krieger: Andres, tell us more about your work in the inner city.

Duany: First let me go back and say that I grant that by making suburbs with many of the attributes of towns, we are making it palatable for some people who abhor the idea of living in suburbia to live out on the periphery. People tell us all the time, "I'm so glad this new town is here, because I couldn't afford a house in Washington." Now there's little chance that our new development will threaten Georgetown or Alexandria. So don't worry: those who can afford Alexandria and Georgetown will still buy there.

Krieger: But Georgetown is not at a crisis point, as are some of the neighborhoods around Georgetown.

Duany: That's true. And I'm saying that you may be right about avoiding creating more places on the periphery. But we look at it like this: the overwhelming majority of what gets built in this country is on the periphery. Obviously, your perspective here in New England differs from that of much of the country. If you go out West, you can see clearly that the suburban train is hurtling forward at tremendous speed. So how do you respond to this train? Dan Solomon has suggested that you can either plant a flag on the runaway train, as Rem Koolhaas does, and say, "Hey, this train is inevitable so I will ride it in style"; or you can attempt to derail it. Much of what we do is an attempt to derail it, to say "No, this is not how the train should be moving. We understand it has to move, but we think the direction is wrong." One of the things I learned from Boorstin is that new growth is the American way. It is deep in our culture and our tradition.

Let me say one more thing about the consumption of land. I have learned

about some statistics from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy that suggest that if every American family were given an acre of land, only 2% of the continental United States would in this way be consumed. In other words, there is not a scarcity of land. This becomes obvious when you leave the Northeast. Outside the Northeast, land has little value; it is a widespread commodity as there is.

Burns: That's an abstract argument, though, because 90% of the population lives within 100 miles of a coast. There is a lot of land in places where there are not many people to use it.

Duany: Let me tell you why New Urbanists are so often confident. There is little useful literature about this sort of development, so we work very much by observation. We're obsessive observers. So if we are certain that traffic behaves a certain way, it's not because we've read about it or theorized about it, but because we've observed it. I travel in planes a lot, and I always get a window and look down. I've seen how sparsely populated much of the country is; even the East Coast is very sparsely populated. I cannot be dissuaded from that knowledge acquired through observation.

Campbell: It's true that there's a trend today toward depopulation of the East. There's more undeveloped land in Connecticut now than there was 100 years ago.

Duany: In terms of the issues Alex has raised about the inner city, I might ask: isn't it important to deal with suburban development, since it makes up 90% of all development? Should we ignore it, because we don't approve of it? It seems to me that the crisis, at least statistically, is just as much in the suburbs as in the inner city. Many New Urbanists work on master plans

for inner cities; the problem is, they're not as visible as our suburban work.

Burns: That is the problem. That's where the market is; the train that you're derailing, or building new rails for, is the train of capitalist development. And these days the train doesn't stop in the city. The problems of the city are not addressed by the mechanisms of the market. And there's another place that poses an important development challenge, which is the dying American small town. It's ironic: the small towns that are the model for New Urbanism are themselves struggling to survive.

Duany: WalMart is still killing them. Actually small towns are easy to work with, technically: as pure design problems they are a cinch. The impediment to working with them is political. The politics are usually very complicated; they use up all the time and budget.

Burns: That's part of the reason why greenfield sites are so attractive.

Duany: Last year, we did two plans for infill communities; our clients were idealistic developers, and every skill, every expense was applied – the best drawings, many meetings, the best cocktail parties to drum up support, etc. But guess what happened? These wonderful infill plans, for dense, mixed-use development, were voted down. Do you know how much money these young developers lost on these ventures? Do you think they're going to try again? Now, what are you going to do about that? Do you want us to keep working on wonderful plans that flop? So how do we balance the theoretical and the actual? Everybody says, "Work on the inner city." We try, but one-third of the work I personally did last year was infill projects, and none is being built.

Campbell: That raises an issue that we probably don't want to get into: the whole issue of the larger political framework. You've described suburban sprawl, or peripheral development, as if it were a response to real needs and desires. In fact, it is so heavily subsidized by the government that you could almost call it socialized planning. The public sector builds the highways and the infrastructure that make it possible. At the same time, the government does almost nothing to help the inner city. I would argue that that larger political framework is what killed your idealistic developers, and it's what is constantly driving the train you're trying to derail. The train is a subsidized, socialized vehicle.

Burns: That's such an important point. The market is subsidized.

Campbell: The political question is: can you change where the subsidies go?

Levinson: Do you see a way to use the growing influence of the Congress for New Urbanism to advocate for the kind of development you believe in?

Krieger: I think that is an important challenge for you; I think there is a risk that there will be a great divergence between your theory and ideas, on the one hand, and the behavior of communities in response to these ideas, on the other. Sadly, that's happened often. A history of American planning might blame Lewis Mumford or John Nolen or Clarence Perry and his famous diagram for certain unloved kinds of suburban development. So there may be some point at which you need to shift not your principles but the focus of your gamesmanship. You have redirected people's expectations and developers' behavior already. This suggests that you could dare to invent new patterns that might further redirect the

development train, might steer it more to public or civic sites.

Duany: But about the question of re-focusing our work: one difference between the suburbs and the inner city is that the suburban developers, in every way that counts, outperform the inner city and its developers. It's not a question simply of the suburbs being "subsidized." The first inner-city project we did was in a town called Stuart. We applied to it everything we had learned from suburban practice, and lo and behold, within two years it has become the hottest place. Every shop is filled; the city lowered the tax rate. What did we do? We applied suburban management techniques to the city. What's happened in America is not that the cities are worse than they ever were; it's that our expectations of municipal performance are much higher. Americans are spoiled. What we expect in terms of safety, of cleanliness, of government responsiveness, of sophistication in retail management, is now so drastically escalated that most cities do not meet our expectations. That is one of the insidious trends of history. If you study what cities were like in their heyday, you find that there was crime and dirt and inconvenience. But today, American middle-class standards are higher, having been raised by the superior management techniques of suburban developers.

Our inner-city work puts in place a variety of physical and managerial techniques. For example, one project now in our office involves taking a large unbuilt superblock of the 1970s prepared for national builders and subdividing it into smaller pieces for local individuals to work with. But we also talk to the sanitation department; we make them see that they've got to achieve near perfect performance. Just

as in the suburbs, not one piece of trash should remain on a sidewalk for more than five minutes. We've been talking with the police about the importance of creating localized no-crime areas. Now it's clear that these are not splashy projects – not the kind of stuff that gets into the magazines and certainly not what's taught in schools.

Campbell: Why is publicity so important?

Duany: Alex asked about how we can use our influence to change the agenda. This is largely done through the press. I'm saying that part of the agenda, the nonsuburban stuff, is too subtle for reporters.

Campbell: Well, magazine publicity is one thing. But if the word gets around among the people who deal with cities, isn't that all you need?

Duany: It's virtually anonymous, this urban work.

Campbell: Government publications don't cover things like that?

Duany: These projects are about tinkering. It's hard to make people understand what you've done. Some of the most important work really is about giving pep talks to the guy who runs the sanitation department.

Levinson: I'd like to raise again the issue of suburban infill. If it's true that people want to live in places like Kentlands, then doesn't this suggest there's a market that would be responsive to retrofitting existing suburbs – making them denser, building small commercial centers that people could walk to?

Duany: The retrofit of suburban housing is very difficult because of homeowners' associations and residents' outstanding mortgages, both of which tend to make suburbia resistant to significant change. Whenever you want to modify a housing subdivision – for example, to remove houses to build

a community pool or a corner store – you find that the plan is frozen stiff by the mortgages and by the homeowners' association documents. They're instruments designed to retain real estate value through predictability. They are allergic to change.

Levinson: What about the retrofit and redesign of shopping centers?

Duany: It is quite possible to redesign such centers but only if they are successful enough so that the parking doesn't have to be surface parking. Decks can liberate areas for buildings to balance the retail. When we design a new center, we design the open parking lots and the infrastructure in such a way that it can later be urbanized as a town center.

Levinson: You've described your work with developers as a struggle to convince them of the worth of your ideas, but you've also described the developments as very successful. Why is there still such a struggle, then? Or is there?

Duany: I have a theory that suburbia was an accident, an inadvertent mistake of postwar policy. America was built for profit, one coast to the other. Developers built most of the beautiful places we now love, and so the profit motive is capable of creating wonderful towns, villages, cities – of creating New York, Boston, etc. What happened after the Second World War was that America made a mistake – the cheap loans were available only for housing. For the first time in history, developers performed the illogical and unprecedented act of building only housing. Now, when did it ever make sense to build only housing? Don't we need places to work and places to shop? When developers built Coral Gables they built a whole town; when they built Kansas City they built a whole

town. Developers have always built whole towns in America.

But because of this detail of government loan policy, we began to build Levittown. Then, a few years later, retailers figured out that their clients were in the suburbs and said, "Whoa, we'd better get out there." And they were permitted to build out there and they developed a typology that was also unprecedented, the shopping center. And still later, in the 1980s, when the chief executives realized that their workers were in the suburbs, they took the workplace out there and created the office park. So what's happening is that the ingredients to make towns are being built constantly, in the suburbs, but they are never assembled into towns. Now why is it difficult to unhang that? The development industry has become specialized. Those who build townhouses don't build single-family houses and certainly don't know how to build retail; those who build retail don't know how to build offices. And, of course, the financial industry is now set up to accommodate this; they cannot absorb any product that is not standard. So across the board there are these enormous, impersonal forces. This is why we struggle.

Campbell: The next question is, what do we do about these forces?

Duany: Well, the only way to counter them is to build alternatives that are so spectacularly successful that they outperform the status quo. This is achieved three ways: faster permits, less cost, and faster sales. We concentrate on promoting success in these terms.

Krieger: Andres, how does the issue of style relate to this need to create places that succeed spectacularly? You've said often that style is extremely important,

although you said earlier today that it doesn't particularly interest you.

Duany: As I said earlier, about Kentlands, it's important as a tool. It's not important as nostalgia. People say we're nostalgic for an Arts and Crafts, or a Victorian world. Style is a weapon. *But if the style is unpopular, then nobody buys and the development goes bankrupt, and what is the use of that?* Another paper project.

Campbell: In other words, your use of style is like your use of language, a way of concealing what you're doing.

Duany: Yes, exactly. Further, I would argue that by focusing on an unpopular style, modernist architects are marginalizing their discussion and marginalizing themselves. They are, in essence, separating themselves from where the power really is, which is the ability of architecture to transform society, to be of genuine social benefit.

Burns: I agree. And, along those lines, you noted the importance of mortgage lenders in determining development. I think it's tremendously important for architects to understand such things. For example, because banks prefer to give loans for two- or three-bedroom houses, bankers are, in essence, determining the program in housing. This is quite amazing, and not well understood. *So I agree that style is not the most interesting subject in a critique of existing practices. This critique is exposing how we construct our environments, and not just New Urbanist environments.*

Krieger: But here it seems important to note that emulation is not co-option. The New Urbanists want to be emulated; not co-opted. Unfortunately, in practice, the imitators are focusing on the styles, rather than on the principles, of New Urbanism. In this sense style is not such a trivial issue.

Duany: You're absolutely right.

Campbell: We're all interested in the language of architecture. It's a fascinating subject. It's just not relevant to what we're talking about.

Krieger: Oh, but it is. New Urbanism may be primarily about breaking conventions; but secondarily it has created or reinforced a convention of styles, which is resulting in an unfortunate homogenization of many environments.

Campbell: But that isn't bad in itself. There seem to me to be two different issues. The language of architecture, whether it's sentimental or inventive, involves one set of issues. The urbanistic innovations of New Urbanism involve a different set of issues.

Solomon: Sentiment versus invention does seem to be the dialectic that architectural discourse revolves around. Unfortunately, neither sentiment nor invention have any intrinsic value. Architectural journalism and criticism are mired in the opposition of two positions that don't mean much. Avant-garde revival versus revival revival – equally vacuous, equally irrelevant. Good building, good urban building, buildings good to inhabit can beg these questions. Tectonics, materiality, environmentalism, urbanity, utility – these are the real questions. We can have hair and comb *in a world where we're so concerned with the* preoccupations that dominate discourse among hairdressers.

Campbell: You talked earlier about CIAM. CIAM lasted about a generation; then Team X came along. If the pattern repeats, we'll be due for another Team X in a few years. Where do you think they'll come from?

Duany: The CNU, I would argue, is the Team X to Team X, as we are completing the march toward the rediscovery of urbanism that they began.

Krieger: Well, I would be tremendously impressed if you came up with a latter-day Team X – a critique and redirection of CNU by one of its founders.

Duany: I'm very interested in that whole heroic period of CIAM and Team X, and in the ideas of social responsibility. I was at Princeton in the years just before Michael Graves and the formalists prevailed, and I still find that earlier era incredibly appealing. Of course, a lot of socially conscious stuff failed, but the reaction to this failure was erroneous. The conclusion was that architecture could not affect society, it could only affect itself; so we had postmodernism and two decades of self-referential design.

Campbell: Because architecture is so expensive and so slow, it lags about a generation behind other aspects of culture.

Duany: Well, we were certainly persuaded to forget about affecting society. We originally designed Seaside mainly in aesthetic terms. We wanted to make beautiful places. We subsequently observed that people behave differently in Seaside; they don't become better people, but aspects of their lives change. So now I feel very strongly that urbanism, if not architecture, can affect society. We sometimes think that the failure of places like Pruitt Igoe shows that architecture can't change the world. But I think the lesson of Pruitt Igoe is that architecture does affect us – in that particular case, for the worse.

Burns: Many people who have studied Pruitt Igoe argue that its failure had less to do with the buildings than with the management. But that relates exactly to the point you were making that urban management is not as good

as suburban management, and that access to resources is crucial.

Duany: Well, management matters, of course, but only to a point. I still say the design itself is critical.

Campbell: It's not one or the other, though, is it?

Duany: No. And don't misunderstand: we are not so unsophisticated as to actually believe that architecture is going to affect behavior in the moral sense. My point is that it can make some things possible. It can affect patterns of life, increase one's choices.

Campbell: Perhaps what people are reacting to when they accuse you of naiveté is the old idea that architecture can create utopia. Years ago I worked for Jose Luis Sert, who once told me that when he was a young man he believed that architecture was going to remake the world into a kind of utopia. There was a time when that hope was shared by many people. So whenever you say that architecture can affect how people live, some people will hear those utopian echoes. But I understand that that isn't what you mean.

Duany: By the way, in the ... debate on Seaside, Peter Eisenman critiqued the very idea of being utopian. He said that the last time the world had utopian visions, they led to the Holocaust.

But what disturbs me most is the accusation by many academics that we are "complicit" with power structures, that we pander to the people. Have you ever talked with poor people in the city about where they want to live? They want to live in a ranch house with small classical columns at the front. They don't want to live in anything experimental or "critical." Even Latinos want to live in Georgian houses. In my experience, the only

people who want housing that differs from the conventional are the intellectuals. And this is often in theory only; it's rarely borne out in their own choice of dwelling.

One of the consequences of all this is that a generation of architecture students – not necessarily those at the GSD – are being encouraged to dissociate themselves from the world of construction and development. To deal with that world is to be “complicit” with developers. The result of this is that the design talent is encouraged to distance itself from very important problems – but these problems do not then disappear; they fall into the hands of the inept.

Campbell: I agree 100 percent.

Krieger: I'd like to defend academia somewhat. Debate and probing are the hallmarks of education. At the GSD we tried a more evangelical approach during the Gropius years; some of the results of this are precisely what is being challenged by the New Urbanists. I think what you are criticized for, sometimes, is your very great ability to conventionalize norms. In doing so, you might be influencing what people say they want and taking them further away from what they might actually want.

Duany: Well, that may be. Again, I suppose that is what the next generation can challenge us on. But the main thing is that they engage their talents in the real world.