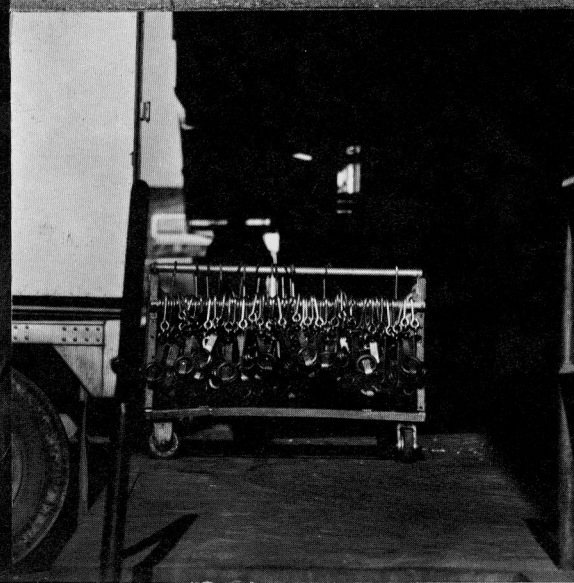
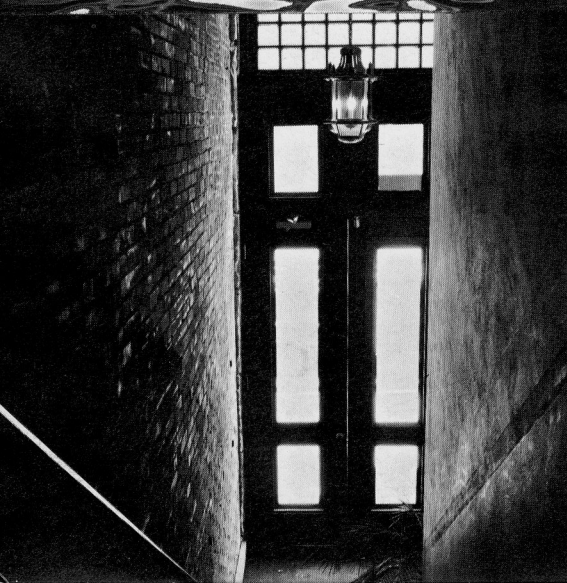
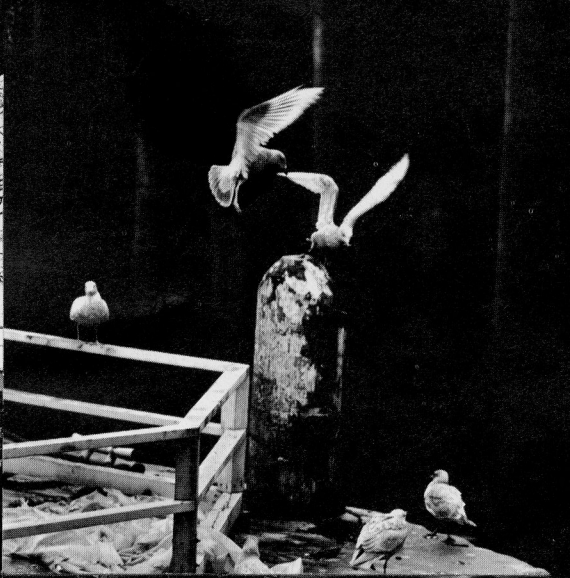


**ACTION:
BETTER
CITY**



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ACTION: BETTER CITY

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Seattle, a favored spot, haunted by memories of an Indian past, a lumbering past, a fishing past, by the ton of gold, by fire, remembering corruption and zeal of reformers, remembering Chinese riots, vigilantes and strikers, the town with guts enough to build two World's Fairs, the airplane place, with two kinds of water, with hills and trees; Seattle, the place in the upper left-hand corner is your place.

What becomes of it depends on you. How do you want it to be? Are you satisfied with it now? Organizations such as Forward Thrust, Allied Arts, the Central Association, the Municipal League and the Citizens Planning Council are not. They work with public agencies such as the City Planning Commission to improve it. In support of such groups a band of some fifty architects and planners joined together a year ago for a volunteer effort. They decided to look closely at their city, to search out the roots of its joy and despair.

This book is a progress report on that activity. We hope that it infects you with a touch of the city madness we contracted during a long, hot summer. We think that it will take a fair measure of such madness on the part of a number of citizens to insure this city's development as a congenial place for friends and lovers.

Much about Seattle is right, but an equal amount is wrong—who can rest until the balance is improved? What follows is intended to draw attention to these problems, to help public and professional agree more closely on their city's purpose before it is too late.

The focus here is on several problem areas with planning suggestions offered, not as final and definite proposals, but as ideas. The areas of study were: Lake Union/Wallingford, Pioneer Square, the Downtown, Elliott Bay, Denny Regrade, and In-City Living.

In each case we examined the existing condition and made an attempt to find ways of bringing back to these areas economic health and public joy. We have not attempted to prepare a city plan. That is the rightful province of the City Planning Commission.

We have tried to find a few modest ways in which the city might serve man rather than the reverse. The hunting society is past, the food-gathering society is past, the agricultural society is past. What we have now is a different society in which the average man is adrift. All the former ways of life contained within them a process, a natural order leading almost inevitably to individual and group well being, psychological as well as physical. Today's urban condition—which cannot and perhaps should not be reversed—does not naturally lead to such a reasonable balance. It is our task to discover ways of reestablishing that necessary equilibrium within the context of today's and tomorrow's form of social organization.

In a small way this volunteer effort may help point the direction. It will take the most penetrating thought, the most complete and sympathetic commitment from us all to find our way again.

One final word must be said about the problem that makes all of the above seem trivial; the explosive problem of race relations and minority housing. Why should we bother to plant roses when our cities are being burned? It is because we see a correlation between the quality of our communities and the mood of our neighbors. As one of our members has pointed out "ugly streets, neighborhoods, and communities, form an excellent backdrop for ugly behavior." The nearer we approach a truly human city, the nearer we may come to truly civilized behavior.

Fred Bassetti,
Chairman, Action: Better City

DOWNTOWN

A:BC Team: Donald Frothingham, chairman, Fred Bassetti, Allen Elliott, Robert Hobbie, Keith Jacobson, Maurice Nesor, Thor Osbo, Howard S. Petersen, Kenneth Richardson

4th & Pike, looking north



Seattle has no focal point. Pioneer Square served this purpose once for a smaller city, as today do Union Square for San Francisco and Times Square for New York. We need again a civic meeting place, a place to celebrate a victory, a place to gather in silence and mourning, a hub in the heart of the city where the action is. Seattle is now a gridiron of slots full of cars, signs and sidewalk junk. The heart of the city is either under a department store marquee on the windy, inhospitable corner of Fourth and Union, or in its tallest building, a private domain.

But we do have the nucleus of such a center—Westlake Square. By means of a bold but sensitive redevelopment, this area could become the finest

urban focal point in the nation. With Frederick & Nelson and the Bon Marche as enclosures on east and west, with the retail and office buildings as a southern anchor, with the Washington Plaza Hotel and a major new office building to the north, with several thousand parking spaces below ground, such a Westlake Circle could establish Seattle's new urban character as sharply as the Forum did that of Rome. It should be a place to enjoy downtown life, a place to meet, to relax, to watch and savor the endless richness of the human parade. And, by establishing a magnet toward which people will be drawn in great numbers, it will also be abundantly good for business.



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Many proposals have been made for Westlake Mall and the area that surrounds it. But none has yet been comprehensive, providing answers to the present difficulties of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, an even broader range of shopping opportunities, land for substantial new construction, plus provision for cultural, recreational and civic amenities. The suggestions offered here look forward to a gradual reshaping in several stages by partnerships between city and property owners. The closing of Pine Street between Third and Fifth Avenues and the closing of Fourth Avenue between Pike and Olive Streets would be required at one of these

stages, at which time these streets would serve as partially-covered pedestrian malls.

Two buildings to be removed are the Bartell Drugstore triangle and the triangle that houses Bob Hale's hobby shop. The Bartell area would be added to the other side of Fourth Avenue in a bulge which would divert the long axis of Fourth Avenue into the entrance of the square. A half block bounded by Third Avenue, by Pine Street, and by the new square on Fourth Avenue would be developed by construction of an office structure having two retail floors penetrating to the center of the block at street level. Weisfield's would be doubled in size. Chandler's and



the Bob Hale triangle would be replaced to tie in with Fidelity Lane in a new retail complex which could triple the prime retail area in this block. The Mayflower Hotel should be extended half-way across the now-closed Fourth Avenue to the west, to Fifth Avenue on the east, and enlarged to include a major office and apartment tower of maximum height.

The feasibility of these two private developments would be enhanced by frontage on the new square and by a proposed city-owned, privately operated, 3,000 car garage beneath the street level. The future rapid transit station on Third Avenue between Pike

and Pine, Western Hotel's new Washington Plaza and the proposed Vance Company 600 Stewart Building will further buttress these developments.

The basic element of life in a city is people. To attract them takes a common effort by owners and public officials to establish a spirit such as that of Rockefeller Center in New York. If this is not done the increasing drain of downtown shoppers to great suburban centers such as Northgate, Crossroads, Southcenter and the huge new developments on Aurora Avenue will result in stagnation at Seattle's core.





BON MARCHÉ

PROPOSED NEW BUILDING

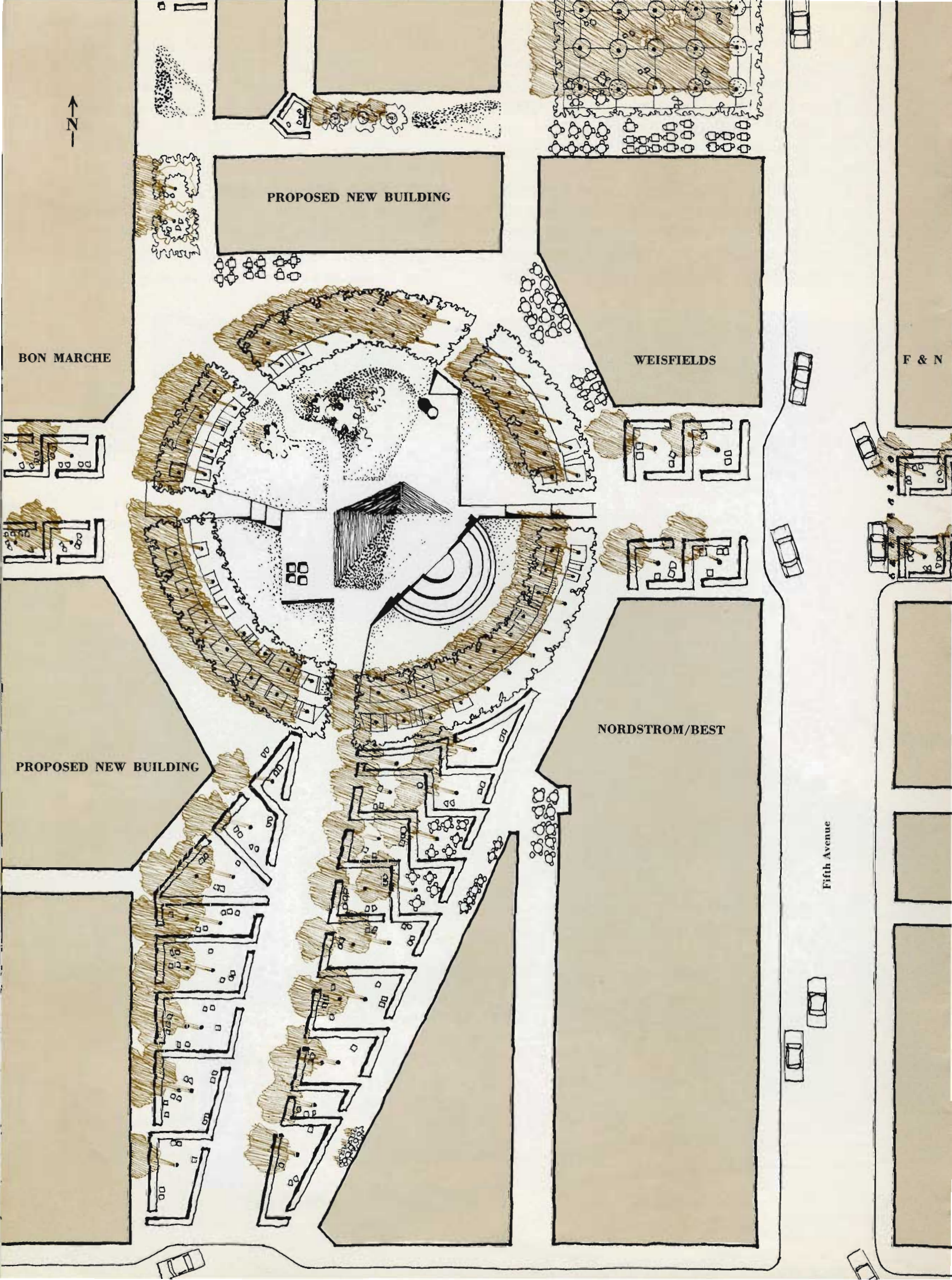
WEISFIELDS

F & N

PROPOSED NEW BUILDING

NORDSTROM/BEST

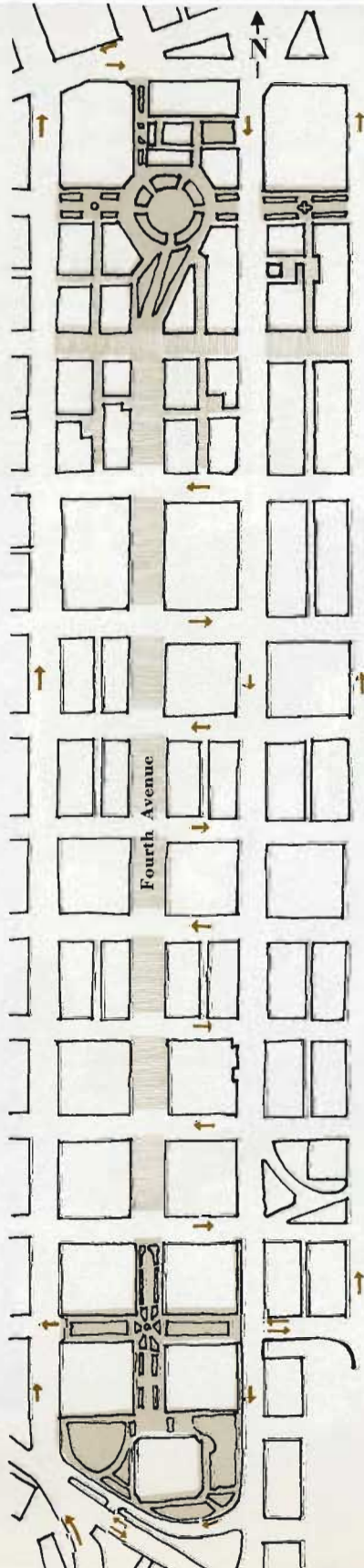
Fifth Avenue



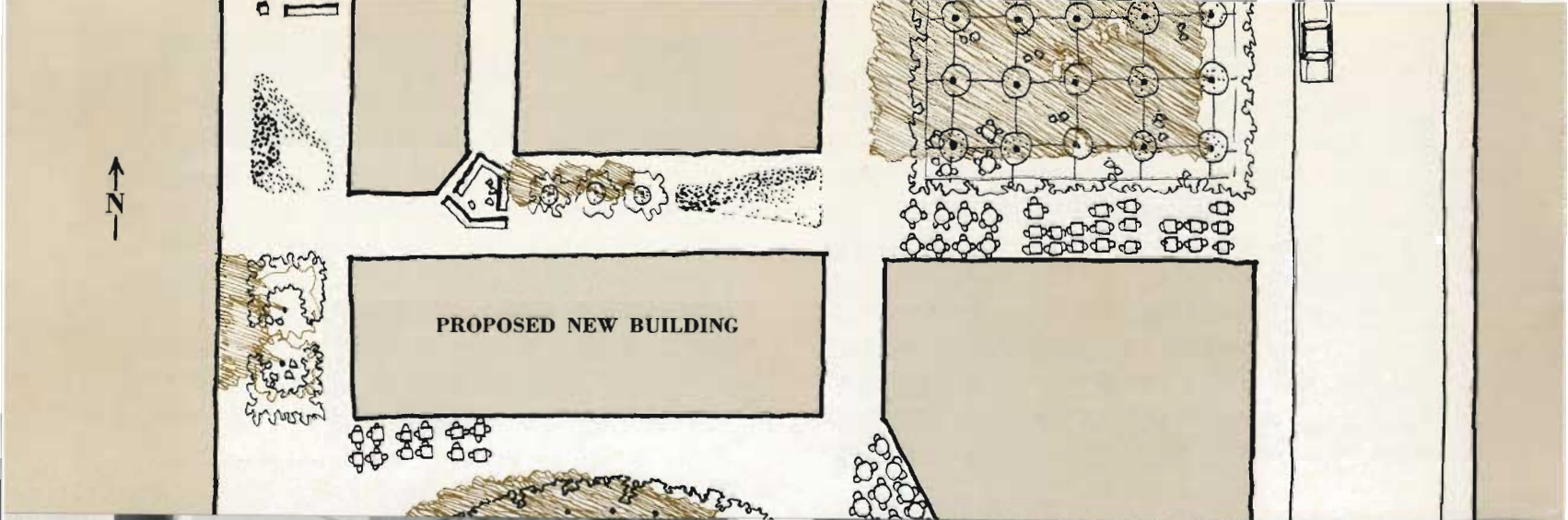
However, large developments are not enough. Many other opportunities exist for property owners to contribute to the quality and attraction of downtown Seattle. Each will support the others. Much smaller in scope are the Grayson Court and Yukon Square studies. These will require cooperation between property owners to realize benefits which would revive interest in the entire surrounding area. To make Grayson Court function, the owners of Lerner's and Taylor's would open the common wall between the stores and develop an entrance

into the court. The court is created by removing the large overhang at the entrance of Grayson's, removing the existing display cases and adding a small garden with trees. A tree in this garden on featureless Third Avenue would be nearly as momentous as the tree which split the Appian Way

Other expansions would lend further strength. They would include a café and sidewalk bistro in the now vacant Grayson's and the development of the four floors above Lerner's into downtown flats complete with a Grayson Court address.



Basic to the concept is traffic circulation. The main boulevard of the city (look at the buildings that front on it) is Fourth Avenue. This would become a two-way street ending at a great government center at the south. North-bound traffic from Fourth Avenue would be rerouted through Prefontaine Place to Third Avenue and north to Seattle Center. Fourth Avenue, north of Olive Street, could become a part of a new connection between Seattle Center and downtown. All east-west streets would remain the same except for Pine and James Streets which would be closed and Terrace Street which would be extended and widened.

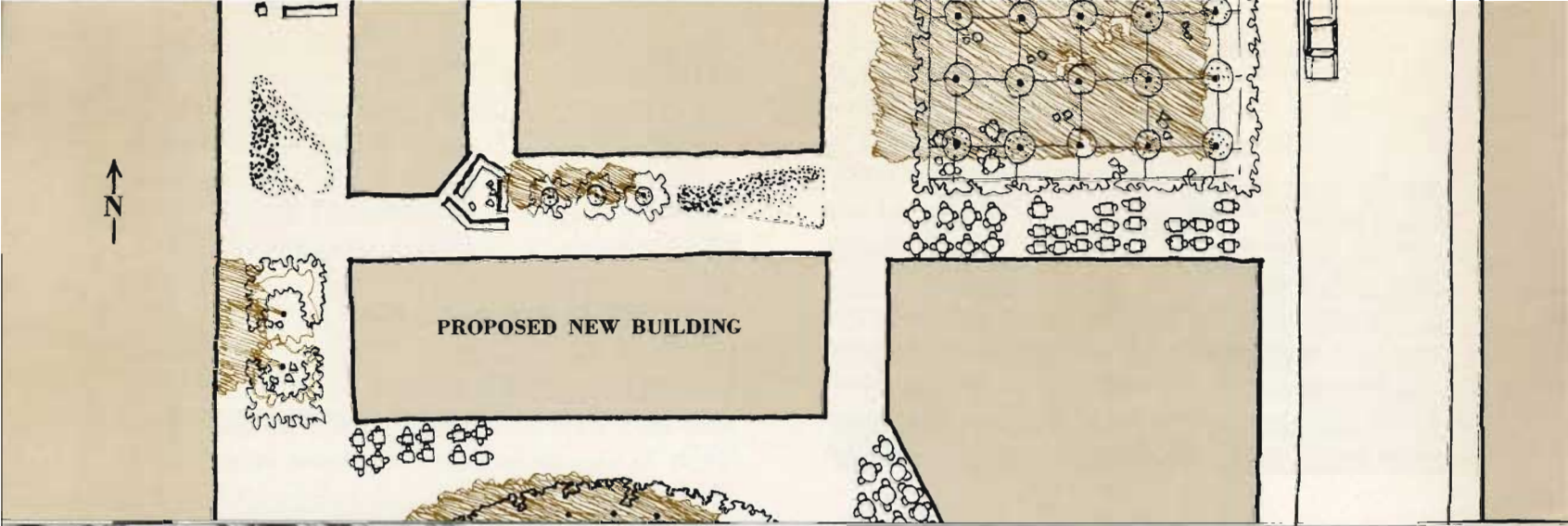


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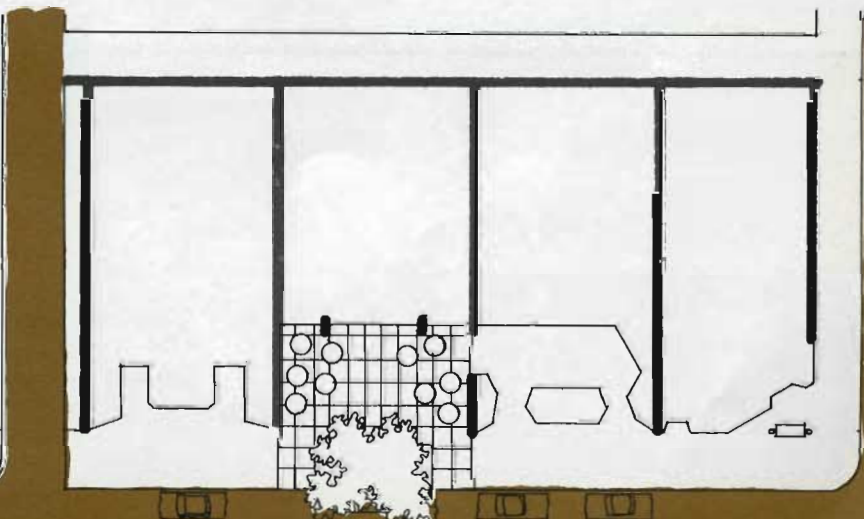
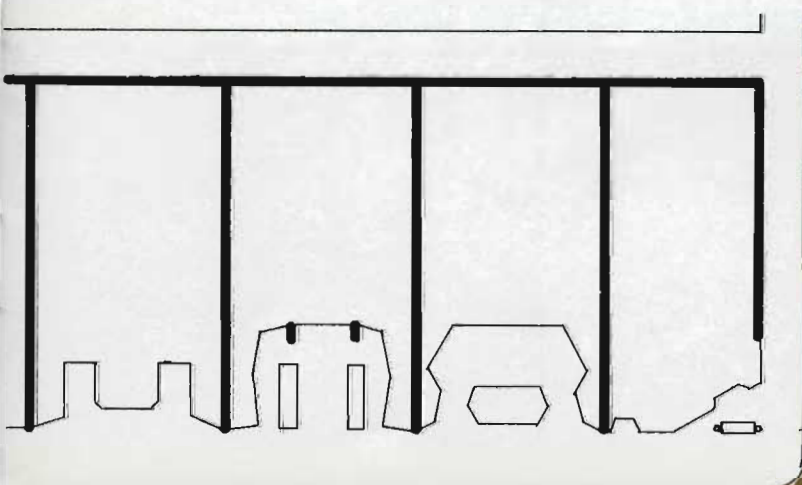




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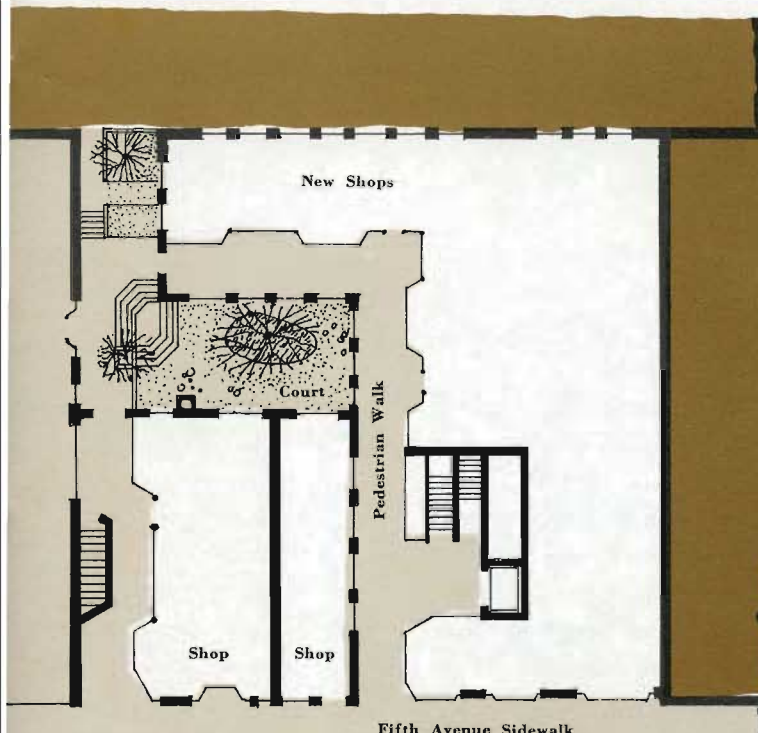
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Yukon Square would be located one-half block from Nordstrom Best and Frederick & Nelson. There a tree is growing in a neglected courtyard off the alley between Doce's on Sixth Avenue to the east and Arthur's on Fifth to the west. If the court were reclaimed and made available to shoppers and workers, that tree would be a present to all. The development is more complicated than Grayson's, involving two buildings, handsome in the back but ordinary on the street front. Its main features—the existing courtyard with its tree — and the central location make it an obvious choice. Jay Jacobs, See's Candy and Hardy's Jewelry should be encouraged

to punch an opening through the south wall of the O'Shea Building directly onto the new walkway which circles the court yard. A miniature Ghirardelli Square could be created, with new tenants on the basement and first floors of the old buildings. Through use of the central interior court under an existing glass roof, the upper floors, two in one building, four in the other, can be developed into desirable business and professional offices. The flat roofs could be removed, and skylighted studios developed which would appeal to photographers, advertising agencies and commercial artists.



Imagination, flair and the boldness which created Ghirardelli Square are essential to the success of this project. From a presently abandoned space new vitality could emerge bringing economic and social health to the area and increased taxes for the city.



ELLIOTT BAY

A:BC Team: Lee G. Copeland, Chairman; Gage Davis, Clayton R. Joyce, Jan Kiaer, Ed Rutledge, Fred Stark, Sally Swanson

The city needs to reconstitute a lost relationship between Elliott Bay and the downtown area. Two ways to accomplish this are: (1) by bringing the intensive urban development characteristics of the downtown to the water and by bringing the water into the city literally and symbolically; (2) through the use of a combination of pedestrian walks and open spaces. These open spaces would be landscaped with fountains and malls which would link the water's edge to Pioneer Square, Westlake Mall, Pike Place Market, and University Plaza.

Seattle possesses a wide variety of water and adjacent shorelines; Alki, Lake Washington Boulevard, Green Lake, Lake Union, the Ship Canal and Portage Bay to mention a few. Because of a lack of these watery amenities, other cities must develop their own solutions in the form of less interesting open spaces. Seattle, however, has the unique opportunity to develop a truly urban waterfront that would serve the city, not only reflecting the presence of the downtown regional center with its international ties, but also contributing a variety of waterfront experiences for the enjoyment of its residents.

The accompanying sketches illustrate one of many alternatives which are possible outgrowths of the basic concept. Seattle's waterfront will be developed over a span of years. Consequently, a number of projects completed at varying times will provide the complexity, variety and richness which are so important to the vitality of the area. Hopefully, a basic idea such as this could guide the efforts of those charged with the redevelopment of this all-important area.



As Seattle's waterfront loses its industry to less urbanized areas, the vacuum will be filled with people drawn to its ever-fascinating attractions. Nothing can still mankind's urge to stick his foot in the water to find out how cold it is, to drop a fishing line or to see what the last tide left on the beach. It is for us to determine whether the neglected waterfront will be used by small children sampling the delicious dangers of deserted buildings or by all residents of the city enjoying the richness which the shoreline can add.





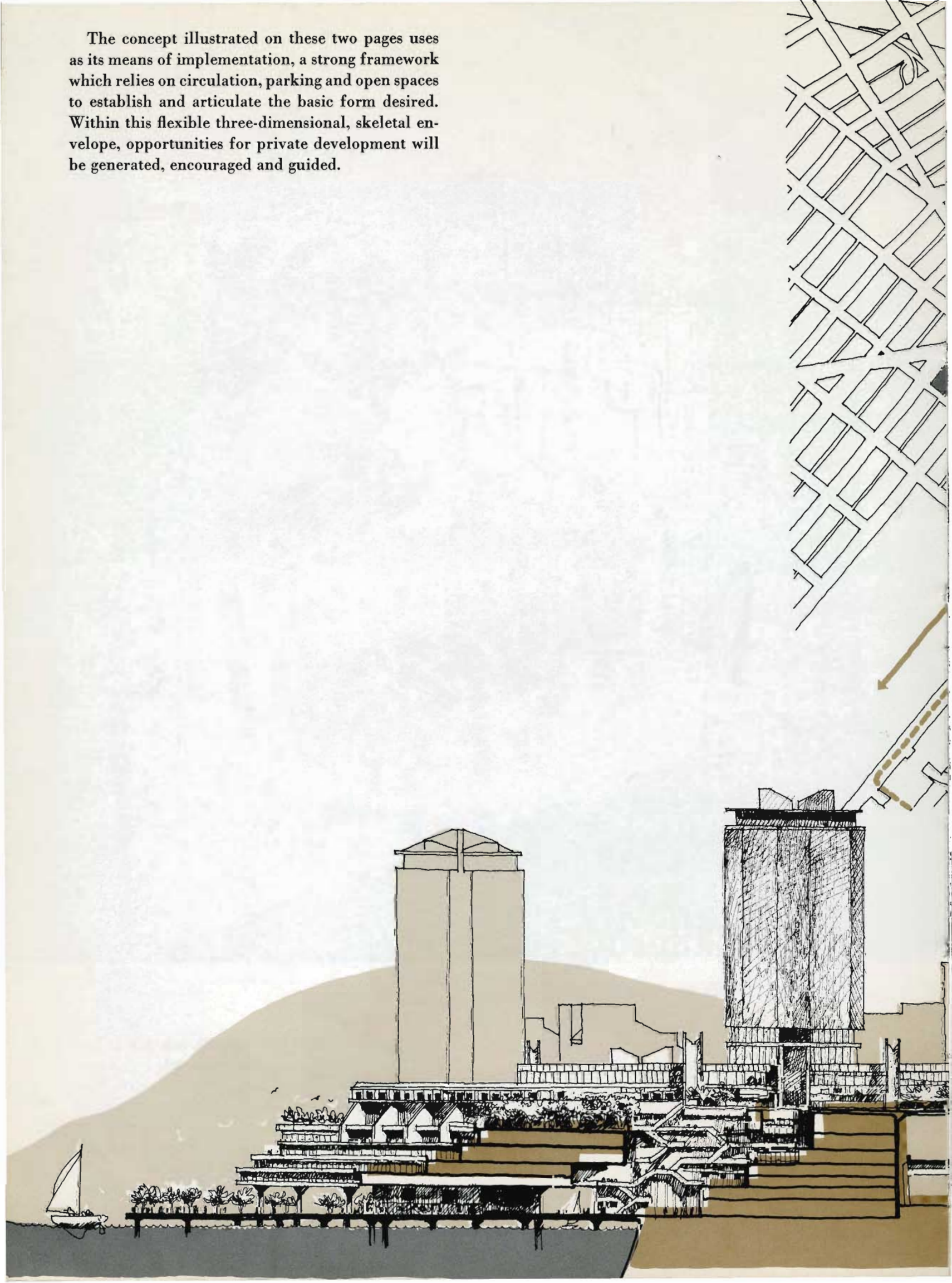
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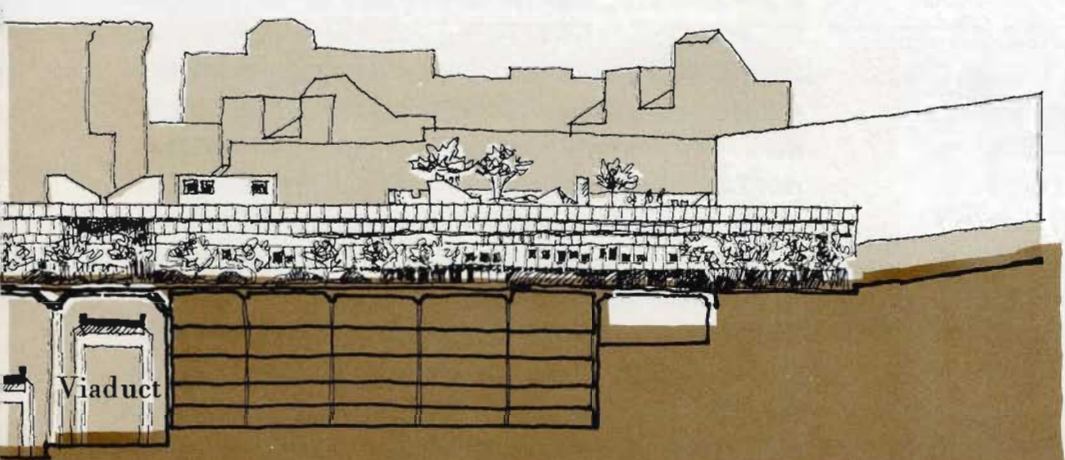
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The concept illustrated on these two pages uses as its means of implementation, a strong framework which relies on circulation, parking and open spaces to establish and articulate the basic form desired. Within this flexible three-dimensional, skeletal envelope, opportunities for private development will be generated, encouraged and guided.





-  Transfer Points
-  Parking Facility
-  Rapid Transit
-  Shuttles
-  Building Fixes
-  Alaskan Way



CROSS SECTION OF ELLIOTT BAY WATERFRONT, LOOKING NORTH

DENNY REGRADE PARK

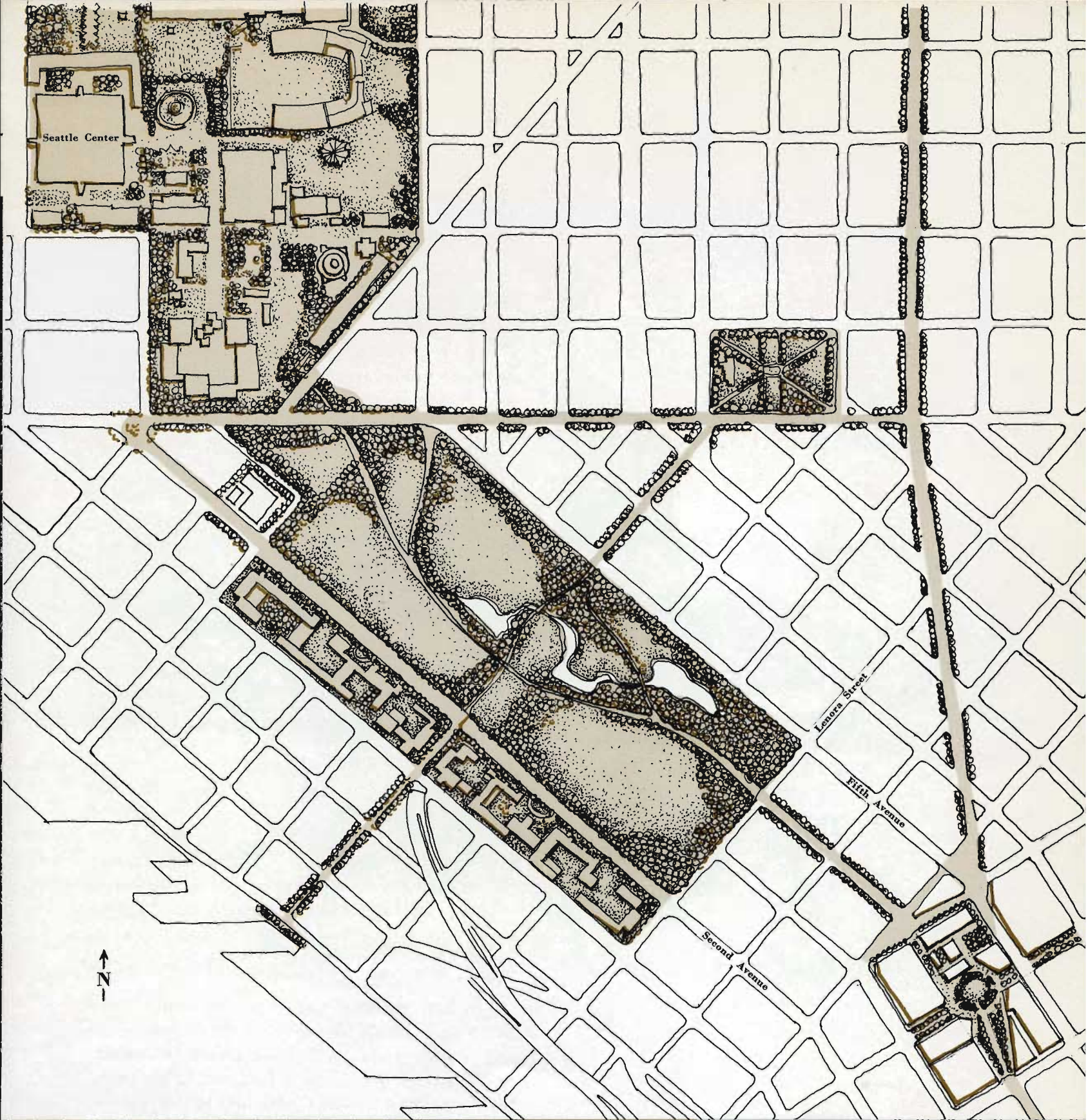
A:BC Team Ibsen Nelsen, chairman, Elsa Bergstrom, Richard Haag, Phillip Harvey, Orrin Haworth, Tom Katsuyoshi, Mark Weijanen

“Commerce is devouring inch by inch the island if we would rescue any part of it for health and recreation it must be now. All large cities have their extensive public grounds and gardens.” These were the words of the Olmsteads who in 1903, as the most famous landscape firm in America, were engaged by a new Seattle Park Board to design a park system for the city. It was a bold and imaginative stroke and six years later the system was virtually complete. Out of the vision of these forward-looking citizens, who were willing to spend one-tenth of the city's assessed value for open space, came Seattle's greatest parks. An achievement unequalled since.

Today Seattle has a new opportunity—an opportunity to create a major downtown park comprising fifty-two acres of grass, trees and greenery located where it is needed most, in the Denny regrade area. In the section bounded on the east by Fifth Avenue, on the west by Second Avenue, south by Lenora Street and extending on the north to Seattle Center, lies the only logical space that could be acquired. Land use in the area at present is a conglomerate of low-rise buildings and parking lots. However, development in the surrounding areas suggests that this situation will not prevail for long. Unless the park is acquired in the next five years it is doubtful that it can ever be because of intensive real estate developments.

The park would not be an isolated entity in the city plan. It would be related to the design for the city and to traffic and transit plans. Boulevards would connect it to natural features—Lake Union, the Waterfront, Seattle Center and to the heart of the business district, in a great, green public rectangle. Adjacent to the park on the west, where the topography changes, thirteen to fifteen story, high-density apartments housing shops at the ground level can be constructed. Service and parking areas can emerge naturally from below as the grade falls away.

The apartment site on the west could be acquired at the same time as the park lands. By capitalizing this area with the park, the increase in value of this site would defray part of the costs of land acquisition for the park. It is not inconceivable that the apartment sites could be at least double in value when the park is developed. One block might be acquired as part of the rapid transit development,



the balance could be financed by a combination of federal, state and local funds as new programs become available.

Seattle needs all kinds of parks: small neighborhood parks, vest-pocket parks, and playgrounds. But we need as well, a large green park in the heart of the city if we expect to create the amenities that will bring people back to the heart of the city. A place with a sense of nature—trees, grass, birds. A quiet park as opposed to the Seattle Center. A space large enough to walk in without seeing the boundaries.

Is the park too large? The answer is it may be,

in fact, too small for the heavy demands that will be placed on it by a rapidly growing population. As a comparison, sizes of other major and centrally located parks are:

Central Park, New York	840 acres
Hyde Park, London	364 acres
Kensington Gardens, London	275 acres
The Prater, Vienna	4,270 acres

Any lingering doubts about the need, the size and the location for such a park can be simply dispelled by the ten minute test. Take a walk. Begin at Virginia and walk to Seattle Center. Or walk from the Pike Place Market to Seattle Center. You will see.



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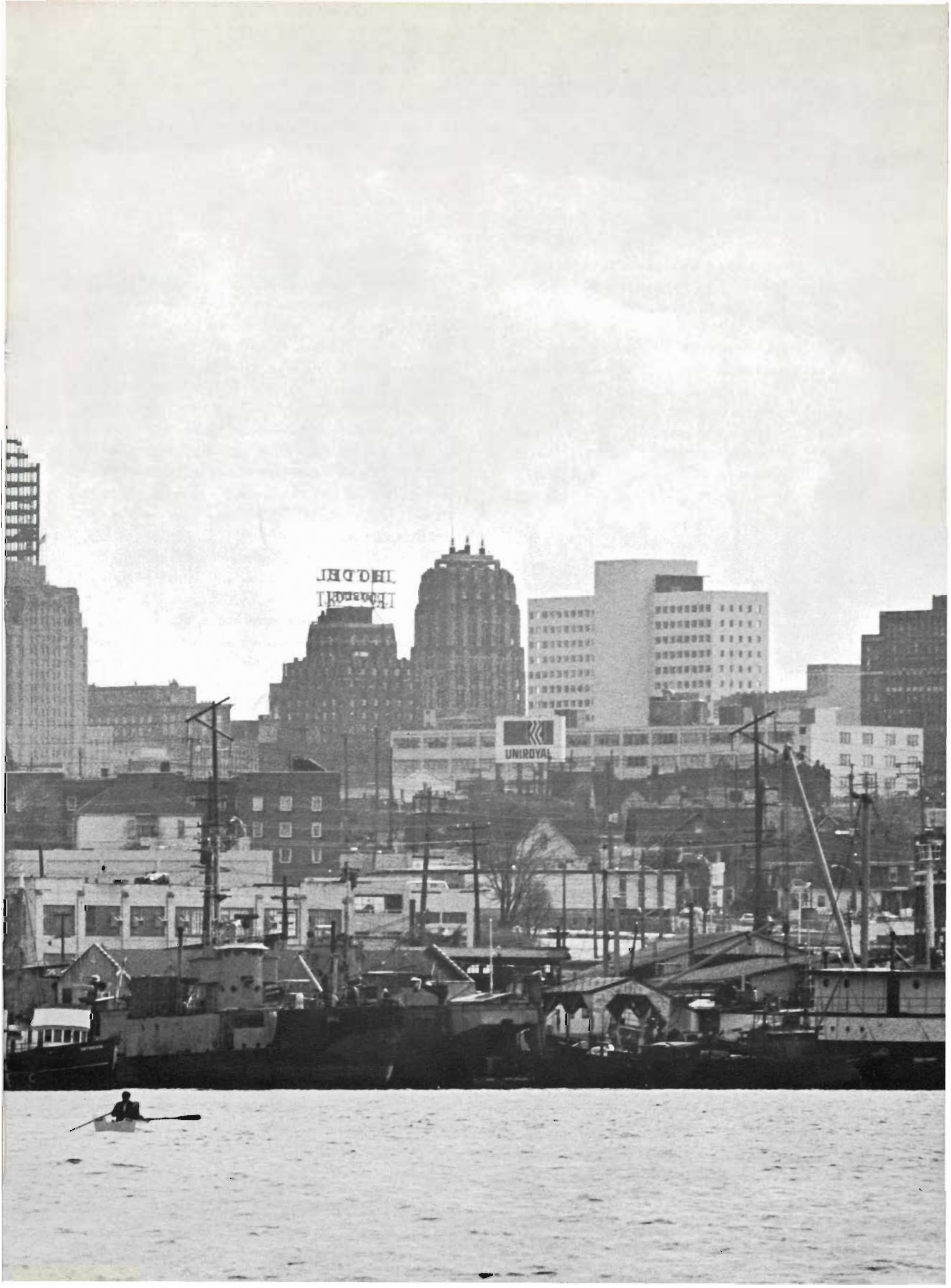
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LAKE UNION

A.B.C. Team Clayton Young, chairman, Eric Anderson, Janice Birkelund, Richard Carothers, Jon Decker, Terry Dragoo, Gerald Gast, George Graham, Richard Hobbs, Bud Konopaski

The waters, shorelands and hills overlooking Lake Union are an important part of the geography of Seattle. Growth and development have been haphazard. The attention by citizen groups and residents recently has been the first step to making it a more vital part of the city economically and esthetically.

The lake and its surrounding basin are marked by diverse activities—many of which will remain for a long time and others which will be added to make fuller use of this urban water resource. It should not become an isolated area, unrelated to the city that surrounds it.

The study of Lake Union is a continuation of the interest generated by the Citizens Planning Council study and the 1963 review by the Seattle Planning Commission. The area involved is the basin surrounding the lake, extending south to the central business district, north to Green Lake, east to the freeway and Capitol Hill and west to the crest of Queen Anne Hill and Seattle Center.

In spite of efforts by community organizations, there remains a great deal to be done if the lake and its surroundings are to be preserved and developed into a useful and attractive part of the city. The challenge is seen in the prevailing conditions.

Its waters are still polluted with oil, sludge and the overflow of combined sanitary and storm sewers. The lake bottom is deeply silted from an accumulation of years of sedimentation. There exists a broad range of land use reflecting haphazard growth and goals for development which are vague, reflecting conflict among the various jurisdictions existing and between governmental agencies and the land owners.

Lake Union and the Ship Canal connecting Elliott Bay with Lake Washington are unique features that have been enjoyed and used for over fifty years. Thomas Mercer first suggested the canal in 1854, although it was not begun until 1911 when a combination of county, state and federal funds was realized. The project including the Hiram Chittenden Locks, was completed in 1917.

Even prior to the canal construction, industry began to appear on the lake. David Denny established a sawmill on the south end about 1882, processing virgin timber from the surrounding hillsides.



Later, the Boeing Company built its first airplane in a Lake Union plant. The gas plant on the north of the lake was a major source of fuel for the growing community but the pollution it created dictated the type of industry and housing which located nearby

When the first zoning occurred in 1923, the large manufacturing zone around the lake reflected the predominant use of the shorelands at that time. In 1962 and 1963 the Citizens Planning Council first called attention to the disappearing qualities of this neglected in-city area. A series of public meetings called attention to the existing conditions and the need for action. At the request of the planning council, the Seattle City Council called for a planning study of the lake to determine present and future use.

The Lake Union Association was formed after the first public meeting of the Citizens Planning Council and has assisted property owners in lakewide problems with sewer assessments, has conducted a long range study of improvements for the west side of the lake, and has sponsored a thorough cleanup of the lake surface. The association has met with the city planning commission on zoning matters and stays alert to matters affecting the development of the area.

The lake has changed over the years as circumstances dictated. Much of the beauty of the surrounding areas has been lost as room was made for the facilities required to serve marine industries and activities. A few years ago, as a result of major land fills, floating islands appeared in the middle of the lake. It was at this point that residents became alarmed. Pressure has developed to freeze shoreline filling until the question can be studied more thoroughly by all parties involved.

Where the original streets intersected the shorelands, approximately thirty-two streetend accesses were created which were used by the public for boat launching and fishing although, today, most exist in name only. Perhaps there is a better way to provide access to the lake by carefully selecting the access points for boat launching ramps which would

harmonize with the pattern of shoreland development. The rest should then be surrendered to the existing non-public uses.

The view and vistas of the lake are little realized and often taken for granted. A study showed the principal vista corridors exist on a north-south axis and at the four corners of the lake. These should be preserved and kept open. A study of adjoining properties should be made to determine how their views are oriented.

We see in the lake area a great concentration of close-in city living with its proximity to both the University District and the Central District making it ideal for denser and more diverse use. A dramatic change in zoning will be required but it can be accomplished as land values increase and in-city living becomes more important. Close-in areas around the lake have a potential for residential and commercial development as harmonious neighbors, above, below and beside each other. Highrise structures can be accommodated in carefully chosen areas.

A few projections of zoning changes illustrate the principles embodied here.

The eastern slope would start with houseboats at the shoreline and buildings in interlocking levels would stair-step up to the freeway. The stair-step planning around inner courtyards (arching over existing streets in some cases) would place new and divergent development around some of the existing structures.

South of the lake, a consolidation of zoning would allow a concentration of commercial and service industries along newly-created plazas adjacent to a tree-lined Westlake Avenue.

The west side would develop in mixed-use building complexes providing additional residential density as well as commercial facilities to serve both the marine recreation traffic and the developing residential areas. The new marine park at the gas plant site will provide incentive for residential and commercial development.

Preservation of Lake Union as a key part of the city's north central urban area will be dependent on some of the following important improvements:

1. It should be linked visually to Seattle Center, the central business district, the University of Washington, the Green Lake area, and Woodland Park.

2. The city tree-planting program should grant high priority to a comprehensive plan for creating the connections to the rest of the city by lining Westlake Avenue, Mercer Street and Wallingford Avenue.

3. The potential of a strip park along the existing railroad right-of-way (which could be abandoned

gradually as industrial uses leave the area) should be given high priority on the city's master plan for park development. It would create a walking and bicycling path from Shilshole Bay along the north end of Lake Union around the University of Washington campus and through Ravenna Park to Green Lake and Woodland Park.

4. Municipal facilities around the lake should be reviewed. The asphalt plant should be eliminated, the steam plant landscaped and painted, sewer overflows eliminated and surrounding streets included in the underground wiring program.

Because Lake Union encompasses the entire area



and between governmental agencies and the land owners.

Lake Union and the Ship Canal connecting Elliott Bay with Lake Washington are unique features that have been enjoyed and used for over fifty years. Thomas Mercer first suggested the canal in 1854, although it was not begun until 1911 when a combination of county, state and federal funds was realized. The project including the Hiram Chittenden Locks, was completed in 1917

Even prior to the canal construction, industry began to appear on the lake. David Denny established a sawmill on the south end about 1882, processing virgin timber from the surrounding hillsides.



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Because Lake Union encompasses the entire area



that overlooks it in all four directions, it is apparent we are concerned with a major portion of the city. After the objectives and goals are established, a resource report on the economic potentials of the lake should be prepared as a basis of a combined planning and urban design study of the area by the city, interested groups, and the various state and federal agencies which have jurisdiction in the area. It should outline land uses, height limit criteria, vista corridors, park and green belt locations, and relationship of the lake to other parts of the city and to transportation lines serving employment centers as the uses of the lake shift from industrial to resi-

dential.

The principal features of the lake must be recorded and marked for preservation as part of a carefully ordered plan developed for enhancing its economic, social and physical assets.

An example of planning, realizing these goals, is in the Wallingford plan developed and recommended to the City Planning Commission by the Wallingford Community Council in conjunction with an A:BC study team last year. Similar studies made in other areas surrounding the lake could speed the creation of a realistic master plan for the Lake Union Basin.

WALLINGFORD

A:BC Team: Don Myers, chairman; Don Berg, Larry Craig, Dave Ernst, Peyton Storli

One of the keynotes to the project, Action: Better City, has been the idea that it *can* be done. People can agree on what constitutes in-city liveability and will act to achieve it.

The concept was demonstrated last year in the study of the future of the Wallingford District by the Wallingford Community Council planning committee and an Action: Better City team.

Starting with the fundamentals of the city planning process—the city's masterplan, the study produced recommendations on density, open space, commercial districts and traffic patterns.

The recommendations were more extensions of the comprehensive plan for the area rather than planning pipe dreams. They point the way to realistic development of liveability throughout the city.

The study found a mix of ages and occupations among the residents with a single common factor—seventy-four percent are home owners.

Opinion surveys found an almost unanimous desire to keep the area as it is now, primarily single-family homes with owners who are planning to stay indefinitely.

So the report recommended no rezoning in the area to higher density.

The study team found a through traffic flow between the freeway and the University District that was balked by commercial strips along the arteries and diverted into adjoining residential streets.

The report recommended the encouragement of commercial uses in a central location with off-street parking, rerouting of arteries to the edges of the community and the creation of vest-pocket parks in the intersections of through residential streets.

Cutting off the intersection of streets would create green pedestrian havens, neighborhood meeting places and open play areas as well as make cul-de-sacs out of the four streets leading into them.

Wallingford has less than half the playground acreage and less than one eighth the playfield acreage recommended for a community of its size, the study team found.

The solution recommended by the team was a central recreation center near the present Wallingford Boys Club and the schools, plus the addition of vest-pocket parks on vacant lots, closed intersections, and equipment for existing school playgrounds.

The commercial strip near the east end of North 45th Street which provides a bottleneck to through traffic was also slowly dying in comparison to a thriving shopping area on Stoneway between North 40th Street and Pacific Avenue.

Dropping the permitted density of commercial uses along North 45th Street and offering zoning incentives to locate in the healthier area would allow centralized off-street parking and better pedestrian access to the shopping area.

With other major improvements such as an amenity zone along the Lake Union shoreline, the removal of outmoded warehouses by zoning the district for apartments, and the replacement of Interlake and Latona Schools with a new central facility, the Wallingford District could offer a good example of increased liveability. This would be accomplished working through the present zoning and planning tools and without disrupting the present character of the area.

The better life for the city dweller does not represent radical change as much as it does a sharpening of the aspects which have made it "home" for the people who have chosen to live there.

The intrusions on those features such as traffic, congestion, lack of open space and unsightly uses can be eliminated through community action when they are recognized as detriments.

PIONEER SQUARE

A:BC Team: George A. Hartman, chairman, Lowell V. Casey, Paul Dermanis, Marvin I. Gorascht, George W. Heideman, Arthur M. Skolnik, John L. Wright

Seattle has a rare link with the past. The group of buildings that comprises Pioneer Square offers variety within a unity of style as well as historical value. The square is like "family" to Seattle—a dimension of great importance in human terms. To leave the area derelict threatens it and cheats us of the continuity that history provides in the development of a city.

When asked to define what he called "a growing impersonalism" in America, Seattle artist Mark Tobey responded, "I mean the way landmarks with human dimensions are being torn down to be replaced by structures that appear never to have been touched by human hands. There seems a talent today for picking the most beautiful and personal places to destroy—what might be called an esthetic destructive sense. Often the defense for this is built into the word 'progressive.' It's my opinion that when people obliterate the past too quickly they don't know where they are in the present. It seems a phenomenon of our time—this impersonalism and must be a child of our over-industrialization and our belief in the material man.

"When I was in China I learned the character called Chung which means the middle. The Chinese have a quotation, "The middle of everything is the best." We don't have any sense of this middle ground any more because we're either racing forward too quickly or reacting backwards too quickly, thus making extremes meet. And then there's no movement in the circle; the goals become the same."

There are three major objectives in the Pioneer Square proposal: restoration of the historic area, creation of a major downtown park, and the estab-

lishment of a new economic base. In order to restore the Square, it is first necessary to determine and set aside the minimum historic area—sufficiently large to remain an entity, but not so large that it would artificially block economic development. This will require a complete survey of the buildings involved, undertaken with the assistance of the Urban Design Department of the City of Seattle.

Successful restoration, typical of the buildings in Victoria, B.C., Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, and on nearby Occidental Avenue in Seattle, can be accomplished. A full-scale analysis of the Pioneer Building as the key building to restoration of the whole area has proved this to be true with the added bonus of a reasonable return to the developer.

The cost is estimated to be about \$15 per square foot—well below the cost of construction of a new office building—and would provide prime, air conditioned office space. The surrounding buildings should be looked on as a group rather than individual buildings. They establish the character of the square by virtue of their scale, materials, height and style. As a group, they preserve the unique flavor of old Seattle.

The new tax base which would result from restoration would be a strong incentive for city encouragement and support. It would be an ideal way to accomplish the proposals within a corporation without federal subsidy, however, the redevelopment can be organized through urban renewal.

In either case, the prime requisite is the proposal. The area to be preserved must be large enough and design standards clear and uncompromising.



In February, 1891, the *Northwestern Real Estate & Building Review* published the following description, "One of the most valuable business properties in the city is the new Pioneer block, now nearly completed, after two years spent in its construction. The Pioneer block stands on the corner of James Street and the Public Square, fronting on the square which is recognized as the center of the business portion of Seattle. The building is the outgrowth of Mr. H. L. Yesler's laudable ambition to erect on the site of his early struggles in business, a structure that would rival in point of magnificence, any business building, not only in Seattle, but in the State of Washington."

The loss of the old Seattle Hotel did awaken concern for Seattle's past when that once beautiful building was torn down and replaced by the raising of a sinking structure which is incompatible with the character and flavor of a restored Pioneer Square. If the garage were removed, a new major park could be created. Some 1,100 feet long, and comprising four acres, open spaces with patterns of paving, playgrounds, benches, trees, flowers and fountains, it would be an oasis in the heart of a city and a pedestrian link from the City Hall complex to the waterfront.





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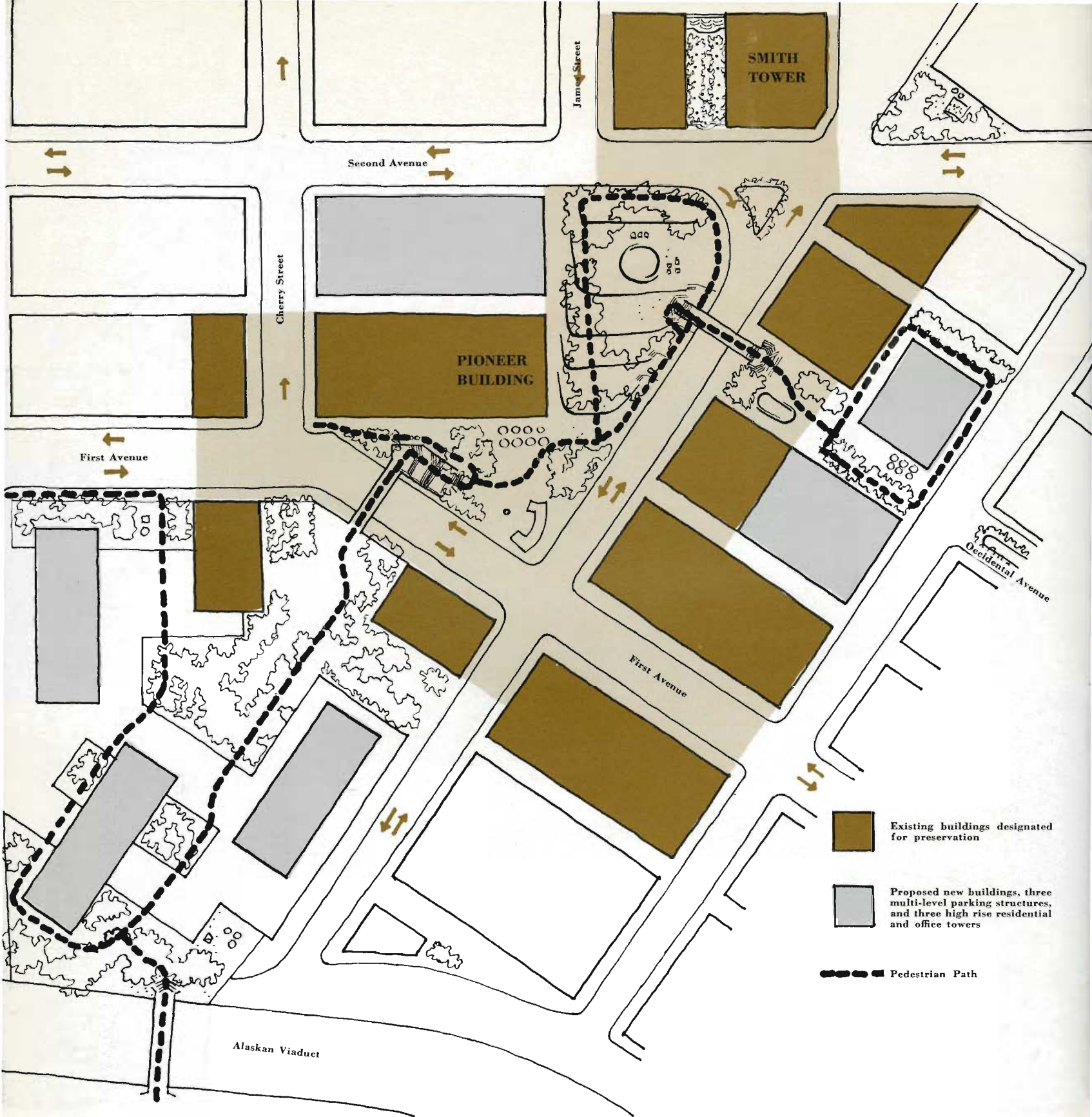
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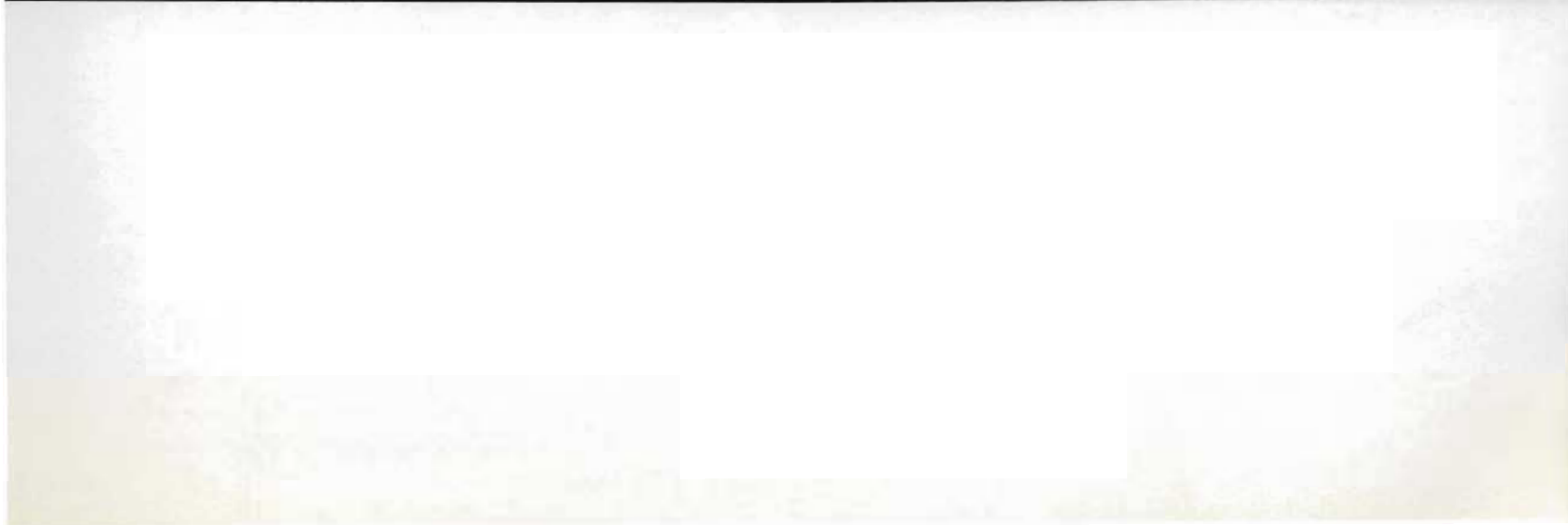


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Pedestrian walkways stretching from Second Avenue to Elliott Bay through four acres of landscaped areas connect the financial district, the Occidental area, Pioneer Square and the waterfront. Shown by the dotted line, the pathways would use street overpasses or underpasses and the landscaped parks on top of new underground parking areas to separate walkers from automobile traffic without disrupting either



IN-CITY LIVING

A:BC Team: A. O. Bumgardner, David H. Wright, co-chairmen;
Rodney A. Knipper, Spencer Wolfe

Seattle's area with the greatest potential for "in-city living" development is the Central Business District and its immediate perimeter. Within the space defined by Queen Anne Hill to the north, Capitol Hill to the east, Jackson Street to the south and Elliot Bay to the west are all of the amenities offered by a great city coupled with a rich variety of residential possibilities.

It is this heartland which supports the many specialized needs of the rest of the city. Here are the financial district, a superb entertainment and shopping complex, and a multitude of employment opportunities which have created a unique social environment composed of differing cultural, ethnic and age groups.

In recent years the obsolete freeway and shabby suburbs have made living within the city more attractive. The forest of new apartment houses growing on our hills bears witness to this fact. Population projections for Seattle suggest that further residential concentration is inevitable; and, since the central sector of our city cannot easily expand horizontally, it must expand vertically.

The gulf between the potential and the realization of inventive solutions lies in the fact that zoning ordinances have traditionally been based on considerations of health, safety and welfare with little attention given to the visual or esthetic implications. The lack of flexibility in existing zoning ordinances does not allow the design potential of special site situations to be realized and often prohibits creative solutions which would meet the spirit, if not the letter, of the ordinance.



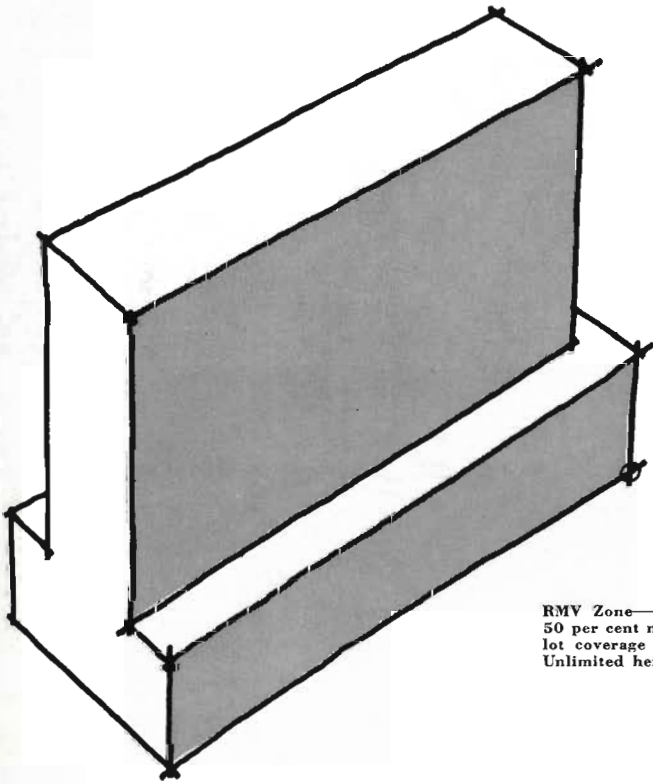
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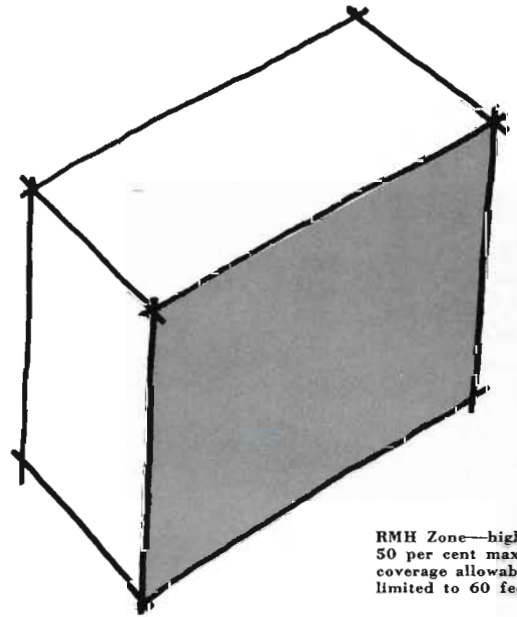
Zoning codes give real *physical* form. RM and RMH zones generate the slab-sided block-shaped buildings that have become a monotonously familiar element in the landscape. The recently approved RMV zones were intended to encourage construction of slender towers which would allow increased density without serious view obstruction.

Ordinances can be based on volume above grade rather than arbitrary height and yard limitations. (Access for fire fighting equipment remains a practical necessity) This approach could recognize sun angles and views from adjacent property as well as encourage inventive architectural solutions.

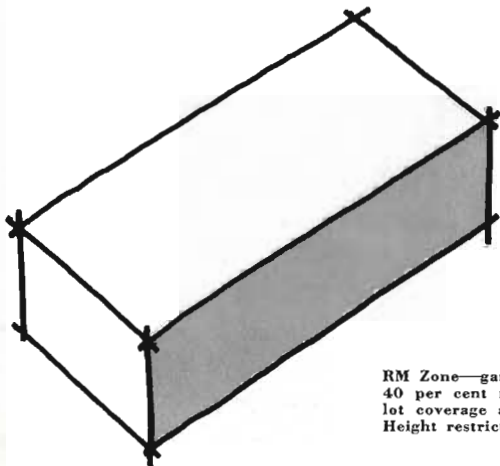
The slender tower produced by Seattle's high rise zoning is a marked contrast to the slab-sided, monolithic buildings produced by other forms of multiple-family residential zoning such as the RM, RD and RMH zones illustrated.



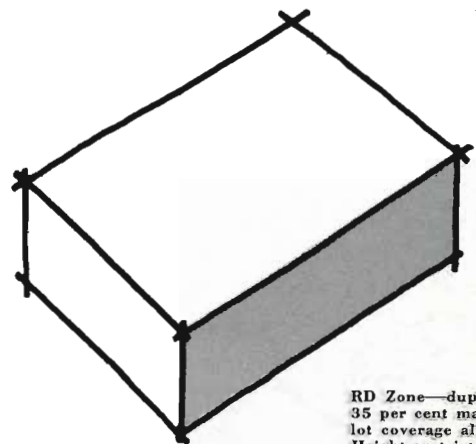
RMV Zone—high rise
50 per cent maximum
lot coverage allowable.
Unlimited height.



RMH Zone—high density
50 per cent maximum lot
coverage allowable. Height
limited to 60 feet.



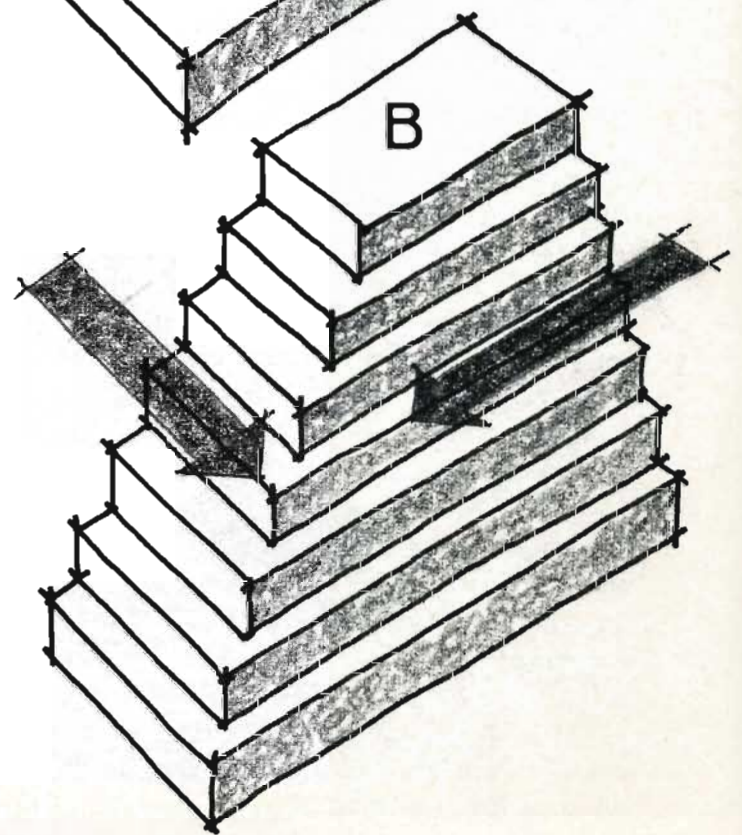
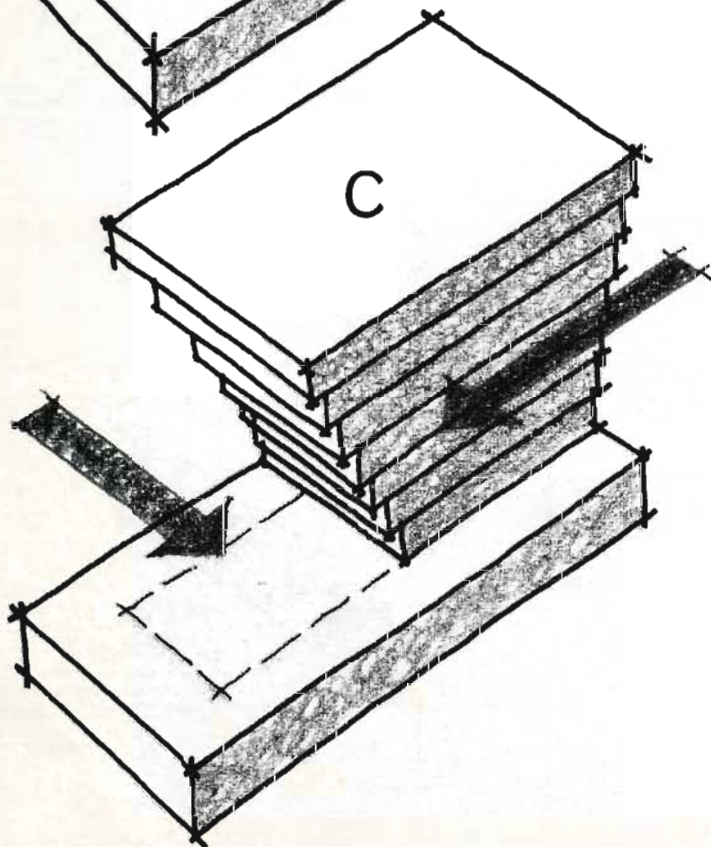
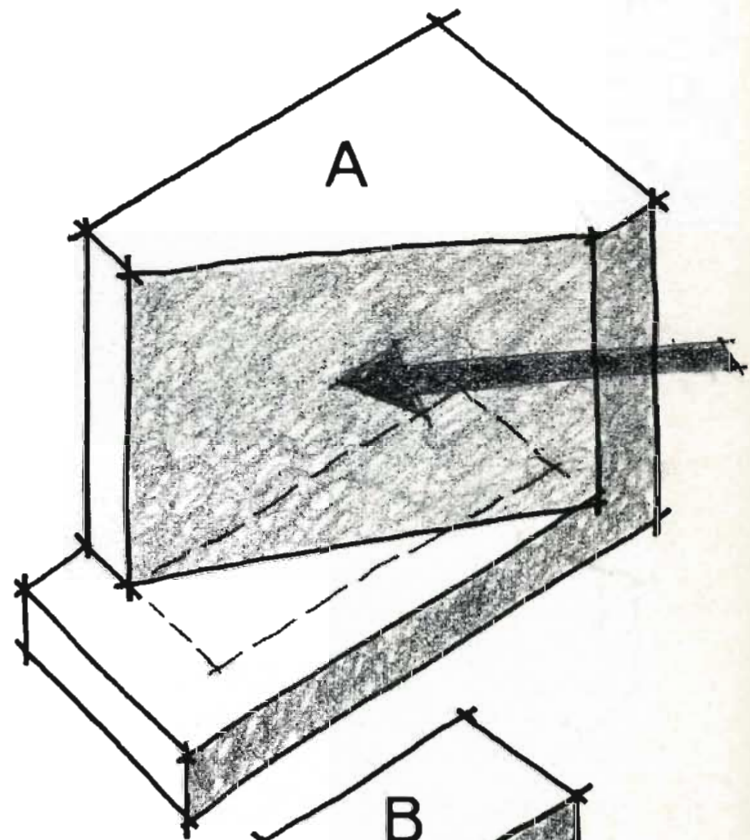
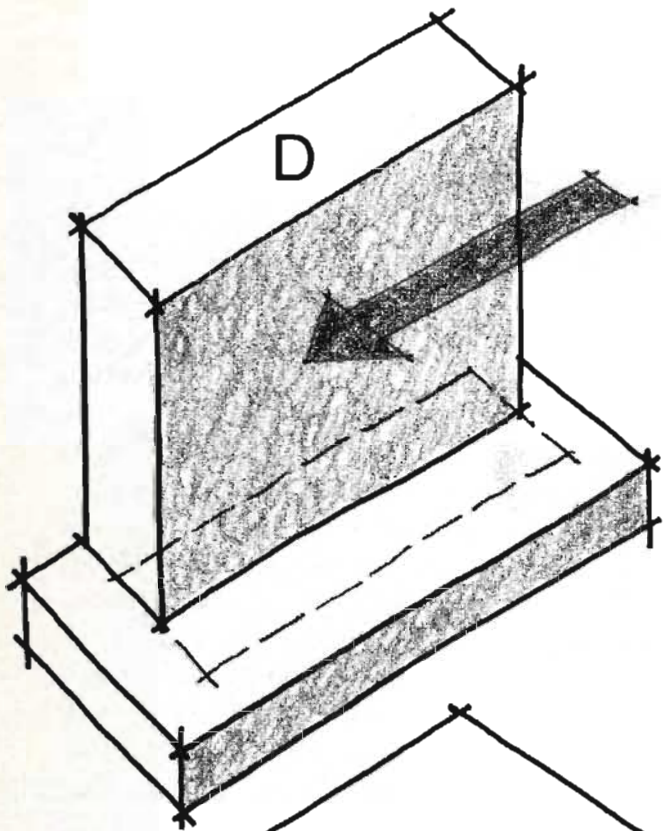
RM Zone—garden apartments
40 per cent maximum
lot coverage allowable.
Height restricted to 35 feet.



RD Zone—duplex
35 per cent maximum
lot coverage allowable.
Height restricted to 35 feet.

IN-CITY LIVING

A:BC Team: A. O. Bumgardner, David H. Wright, co-chairmen,
Rodney A. Knipper, Spencer Wolfe



The economic advantage of the high rise zoning is illustrated by the greater amount of lot coverage allowable in the ordinance, thirty-five per cent for duplexes, forty per cent for garden apartments, fifty per cent for high density buildings up to six floors in height and fifty per cent for the unlimited height allowed for high rise. This drawing was prepared before the high rise ordinance was amended to restrict the base portion of the high rise development to four feet above grade rather than the thirty feet illustrated. The economic advantage of highrise zoning is in the greater amount of apartments which can be built on a site.

The criteria used in defining these zoning possibilities would allow increased lot coverage and decreased yards as a credit for proportionate reduction in total building volume. Many variations of this principle could be built into each zone and be applied by the city based on the individual site situation. For example:

Rectangular, slab-shaped towers should be oriented parallel to sight lines (view potential) from adjacent property (Illustration A)

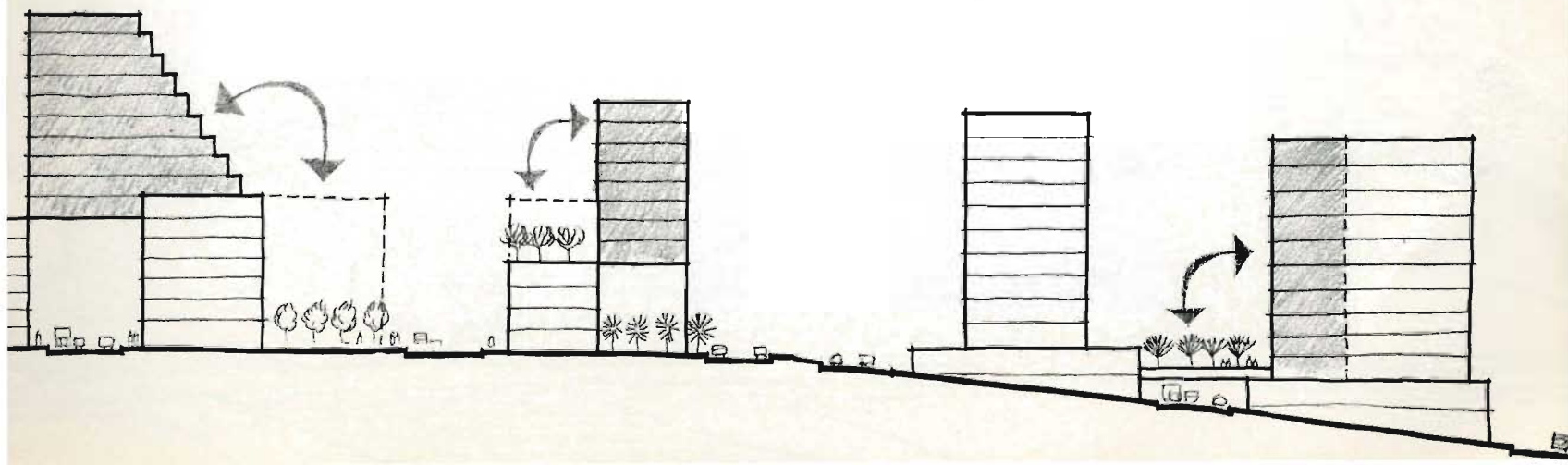
Pyramidal-shaped towers would minimize the view obstruction from high elevations and would maximize the possibility of sunlight in the building and on neighboring property (Illustration B)

Inverted pyramid and "mushroom" forms, or forms with voids at lower elevations, would permit views and sunlight under and around the main building mass from lower elevations. (Illustration C)

The requirement for dual side yards is a wasteful practice. In some zones, side yards should be eliminated, i.e., row houses and one story elements at the base of towers. If tower structures could be built, providing a single side yard twice as wide as the two yards ordinarily required, more useable open space would be created on the ground. (Illustration D)

By using air rights, elevated parks and playgrounds could connect new high rise apartment towers with usable open space. Private developers could construct elevated parks which span the existing streets or alleys in return for increased allowable building volume. The size of the elevated park would be controlled by the sun orientation. Developers also could be allowed to construct housing above streets or alleys in exchange for public open space. The height above the existing street, the volume and proportion would again be limited by the size of the open space provided and the sun orientation.

Shaded areas represent additional living space which would be traded for park space in alleys (left), on roof areas (center), or on overpasses spanning existing streets (right)



Useable open space should be qualified by sun orientation, and the amenities should be provided for the recreational activities of various age groups.

The anonymous quality of most multiple residential construction is an affront to the inhabitants' sense of personal identity. One of the advantages of a detached single family residence is that the owner can cause its external appearance to reflect his own character and taste.

It would be possible to bring that special quality to multi-story buildings in the city by constructing artificial building sites. These would in fact be the floors of incombustible tower structures which could

be purchased in the same way that land for new houses is usually acquired.

The tower itself would consist of a fire-proof structural skeleton provided with vertical circulation and emergency egress. The only finished space would be a foyer for one or more new "residences" at each floor. Utilities would be provided at each floor and would be connected to each "residence" separately.

The external skin of the building would be completed gradually by individuals as sites were sold and inhabited. The resultant structures would bristle with individuality. Cantilevered and recessed

COMPLETED ARTIFICIAL BUILDING SITE



balconies, windows and wall materials would reflect the personality of each owner

In very tall buildings whole floors might be devoted to community activities or recreation. The base structure would allow the variety of accessory uses permitted in the proposed RMV zone.

The necessity for higher density could generate cluster schemes. This type of housing could promote a true feeling of neighborhood. Several developments could relate to schools, churches and retail groupings becoming a community while being essentially urban in character. Each group would share utilities, space and elements of structure. Parking would occur in groups at the top and bottom of the housing area with intermediate parking along the slope if the cluster becomes large. Residents would walk via terraces and open spaces to their units.

The freeway that runs north-south through our central city is the main artery of vehicular life. The manner in which it relates to the topography varies from sub-surface to surface to the elevated.

These relationships are not well resolved visually and, as they stand, have produced acres of no-revenue land. Land which has been thus blighted by the freeway could be used for high density building sites.

The elevated portions of the freeway command some of the city's best views and would be desirable for residential use. Badly needed commuter parking for the downtown area could be housed under and around the freeway, thereby providing a buffer and allowing other activities to take place very close to the actual road beds.

Returning this land to usefulness would eliminate blight and increase tax revenues.

Seattle's natural assets and unique qualities are in imminent danger of being destroyed by unsympathetic development. If we are to avoid superimposing Los Angeles on our seven hills, we must take the planning steps necessary to preserve the open spaces, landmarks, waterfront and views that have been the source of Seattle's individuality. One effective measure would be to treat zoning as a tool for creative growth instead of a system of restrictions on profit-motivated construction.

A HISTORY OF ZONING IN SEATTLE

The development of the American city as an orderly or beautiful urban form is frustrated by the absence or unwieldiness of the legal traditions which the builder of these cities is forced to use. Any effort toward achieving liveability through design must therefore face these limitations and include devices to work with or overcome them.

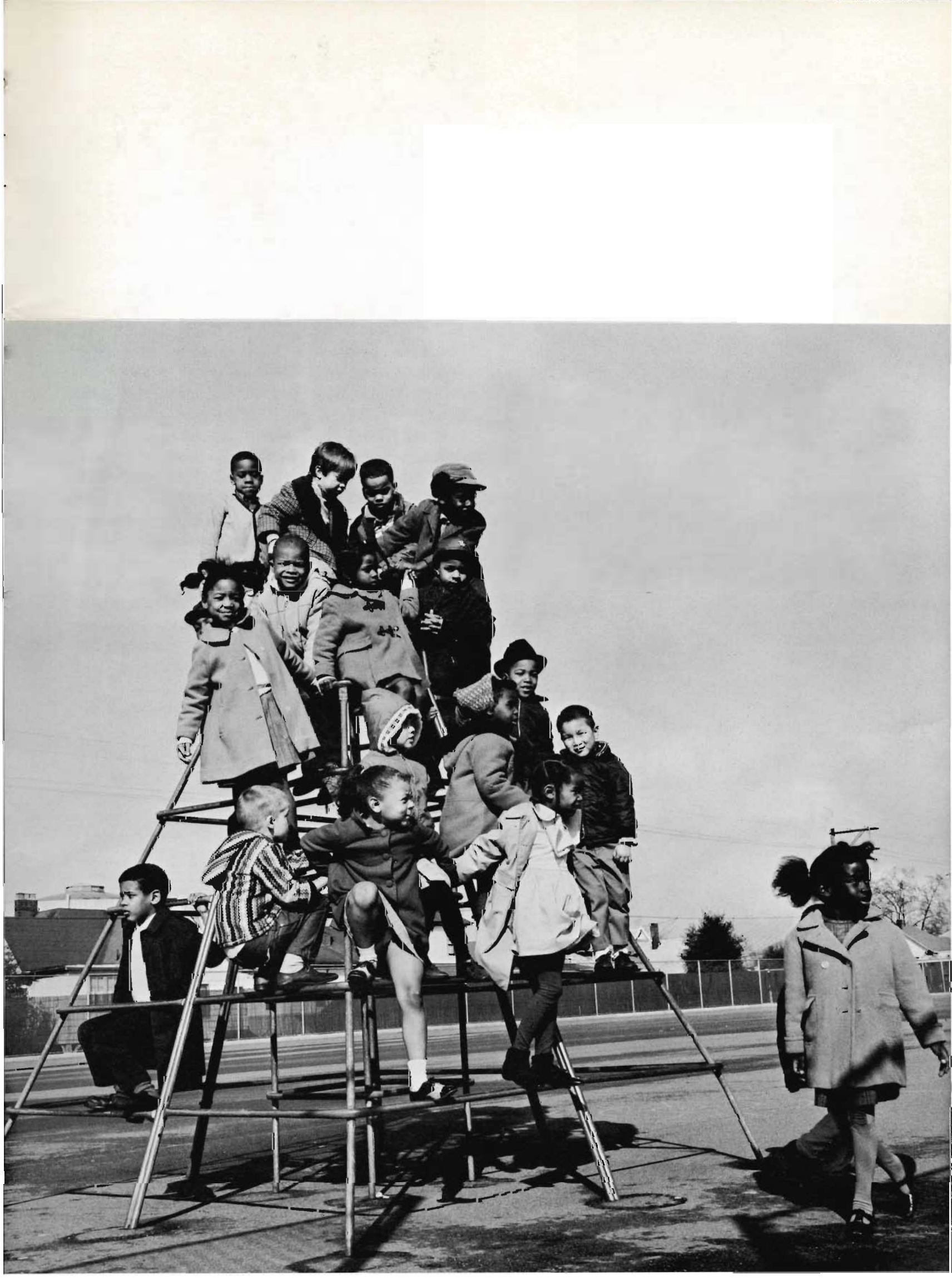
To suggest the full scope of what is lacking and what needs to be done in the area of legal tools and their effect on, or potential for, urban form can heighten our awareness of a sense of urban design in its processes and its product.

The means for achieving orderly growth, to say nothing of design or beauty, are frail. The day-by-day actions of building buildings, freeways, parks, houses and acceding to the legal requirements of the zoning ordinance and subdivision controls result in forms having only superficially any conscious design plan.

Ours is a pluralistic society in which decisions as to form, spaces and movement come from a multiplicity of decision makers with not necessarily similar viewpoints as to social, economic and esthetic objectives. How then to bring beauty to the product? What are the criteria of beauty and its standards and measurements which society will accept and the courts uphold?

The acceptance of controls for community development has considerable tenure and their interpretation edges increasingly toward goals of beauty and harmony. America's first conscious venture into such efforts occurred at the turn of the century as a result of the impact of certain well publicized events, especially Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

A certain enthusiasm developed in the nation for the "City Beautiful" and out of this rose a period of some fifteen years known by that title. It was virtually ended by the advent of the First World War. Based almost entirely on the power of persuasion and the acquiescence of private and public decision makers to its visions, a sprinkling of monumentality appeared about the country—often in individual buildings like city halls and railroad stations but sometimes achieving splendors in areas on a wide



A HISTORY OF ZONING IN SEATTLE

scale in civic centers, boulevards and parkways, parks and waterfront development.

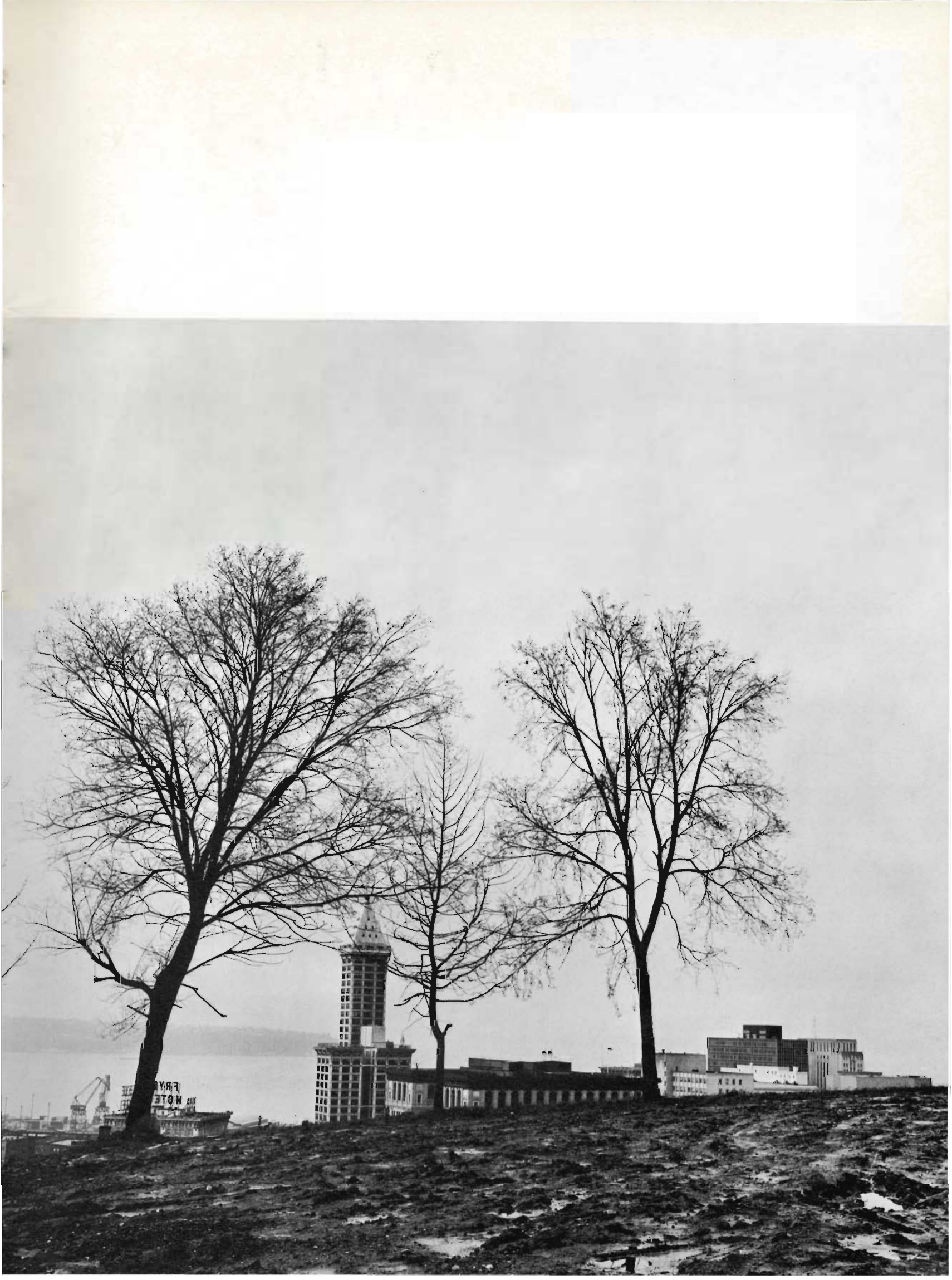
New York City's comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1916 was the start of modern planning legislation in the United States but its ambitions were in no sense oriented toward esthetics. Health, safety and welfare were protected in the New York scheme and other ordinances based on it, reflecting its precedents in unified land uses, setbacks, height controls and density standards rather than standards of visual design.

The Standard Planning Act of 1926 written by the U.S. Department of Commerce as a model on which American cities could base their zoning ordinance did include the term "civic design" but it was to have little significant impact on subsequent state enabling legislation and zoning ordinances in the four decades that have followed. Efficiency and function rather than three-dimensional design quality were to be the bias and, though city growth guided by these zoning ordinances would inevitably reflect their guidance, the process was indirect, the product too often marked by a mechanical and sterile monotony rather than a varied and rich texture of forms, spaces and functions.

Then in 1954 came the U.S. Supreme Court's most direct support for the fight of the community for beauty—the case of *Berman vs. Parker*. Justice Douglas, writing for the majority, noted that:

"The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive the values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, esthetic as well as physical, esthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well balanced as well as carefully patrolled."

The decades following that decision have been marked by a new focus on esthetic problems of urban development. In part, the results have been minor themes, perhaps interesting in themselves but modest in their ambitions: billboard and sign controls, street tree plantings and the establishment of art commissions at local and state levels. Of greater



A HISTORY OF ZONING IN SEATTLE



long range potential has been the addition of personnel to planning staffs specifically chosen for their talents as urban designers. All these are manifestations of a growing acceptance of the idea that the community has the right and responsibility for development of environments of improved visual quality in which controls must be established to bring this about.

The right to employ police power to regulate esthetics has been established by the courts, the community is now in search of translating the right into process. Zoning, so familiar for its traditional techniques and product, may continue to represent such a power, but it is also being seen as having done more to prevent well designed cities than to encourage them. The tool may be retained in spite of its failures but its use is being re-examined for employment with more broad-based objectives.

Planning in the State of Washington is based on the Washington Laws of 1935 in which city planning commissions may develop comprehensive plans whose purposes may include the objective "to conserve and restore natural beauty." This same constitution provides in Article XI that "any county, city or township may make and enforce within its limits all such local police, sanitary and other regulations as are not in conflict with general laws." Advisory duties of planning commissions are related to this permission.

The City of Seattle's planning tradition as a legal reality reaches back to 1910 when a Municipal Plans Commission was established with advisory responsibilities only. The city's present Planning Commission is included in Article XIV with the following assignment

"It shall be the duty of such commission to make recommendations to the legislative and other city departments on the city's broad planning goals and policies and on such plans for the development of the city as its present and future needs may require. The commission shall also advise and make recommendations to the legislative and other city departments in connection with other matters relating to the city's physical development and redevelopment as may be directed and

by ordinance."

Like the rest of the country, Seattle's interest in urban design is of rather recent origin, most of which has been focused on the central business district. In 1963 the City Council adopted a CBD plan and in its resolution stated:

"It is recognized that said comprehensive plan, providing a general framework for public and private development may be used as a foundation for an urban design study, that the criteria and content of such a study should be determined in consultation with interested business and civic groups and with the assistance of architects, landscape architects and related professionals, that the results of the study may be used in progressive refinements of the general plan—providing alternative proposals where necessary—and in detailing segments and elements of the plan."

In large part due to the stimulus of these CBD activities, the Council authorized the addition of urban design personnel to the planning commission staff, what had started out as design objectives for only the central part of the city now were expanded to include the city as a whole. It is likely that out of all this will come an urban design element addenda to the city's comprehensive plan. This, then, represents the kind of administrative and legal framework in which the City of Seattle operates and the sort of foundation which our ambitions for a design future for the city must either work with or amend.

First the city must decide just what kinds of goals or principles we are subscribing to, the kind of job we hope to perform and to determine the tools we select for doing it. Once it is agreed the community has design goals, then there must follow some decisions on the kinds of controls to retain, amend or add to achieve them. The precedent of control is established, its detail is not.

Controls or standards in which the tone is positive rather than negative are essential to encourage qualities we find attractive in the urban environment rather than concentrating on certain elements selected as undesirable and leaving entirely undefined just what we would ask the community to develop. Variety, scale, a sense of community and contain-



ment, harmony, unity, urbanity, sequence, rhythm and scale, color, texture, contrast—the streets and urban forms we tend to admire are likely to include much of all these whether in the forms themselves or the spaces they create. They are also the very qualities which much present zoning tends to preclude, rigidly determining a uniformity of form and function by its negations, rarely providing the opportunity for flexibility as an approach to good design.

Over all rests the responsibility for controls which will pass the test of constitutionality—though the courts are increasingly providing us with the “go ahead” toward innovation—and be operational as well. Ultimately, controls must be administered, and, as legal precedent requires, the administration must represent equal justice and consistency

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