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Cover and introduction

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ARCHITECTURE OF DEMOCRACY



A man must believe that the world is a world for him; if he exercises initiative and takes a step, his action will have an effect, however small, in the same real world . . . A man has faith that if he is well-intentioned, rational, not fanatical, he is not alone; there is a human community that is thinking the same thoughts as himself and his friends and ready to act in concert.

Paul Goodman

ARCHITECTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Rolf Goetze
Robert Goodman
Peter Grenell
Carl Linn
Lisa Peattie
Donald Turner
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Immaculate Heart

The Sisters of The Immaculate Heart occupy a peculiar place in the heart of the community in which they work.

The uniqueness of this place in our hearts becomes evident when we know that they will be torn from (what we on the outside have considered) their comfortable quarters.

The significance of the move and the potentials in the new relationship to the other colleges at Claremont, have all the dramatic expectancy and risk that we have learned to expect from Immaculate Hearts.

However, a new college means buildings and buildings mean architects and architecture means architects and it all makes us break out in a cold sweat.

If only they were moving into an evacuated army barrack or an abandoned monastery or some really great old warehouse—then we would have complete faith.

But architecture on order is a different thing and those architects who could subjugate themselves to the real and evolving needs of such a community maintaining a relentless concern for quality—would be very rare.

What we, who love Immaculate Heart, want for the college is easier to taste than it is to say.

We guard ourselves against wants that could be hazardous—such as expressions of form or structure or monumentality or even an over-emphasis on beauty.

We want a college that will shelter those within it on the sad days as well as the gay days.

A system of buildings that will not be embarrassed by complete changes of programme.

A structure that can be Scotch-taped, nailed into, thumb tacked, and still not lose its dignity.

Spaces that will welcome and enhance teaching machines as well as celebrations and pageants.

Materials that will not tend to become shoddy and will still show a response to care.

One would hope that the experience of the buildings would seem so natural that the question of their having been designed could never come up.

We want these buildings to demand something of those who enter them and to enrich and shelter those who remain within.

We know now why Gurus choose caves.

Charles James

February 14, 1967

This issue of *Architectural Design* responds to a question set by the editors. They recalled the issue of August 1963 which drew attention to the architecture-without-architects of the squatter settlements in developing countries and which found, contrary to much popular opinion, that these serve a very positive function for their residents. Now, they asked, what lessons can we draw from this which are relevant to the very different situation in which architects work in the developed nations?

We came together to consider this question from various professional backgrounds—architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and anthropology—and from varying kinds of professional experience in both developed and developing countries.

As we tried to answer the question set by the editors, we began with a shared perception that there are many positive aspects of the squatter environment, especially in the flexibility of the solution and its adaptability to the changing needs of families over time, and in the sense of autonomy and self-determination for both individuals and communities in making their own environment directly. In contrast, the world which we saw around us in the United States, with all its relative economic lavishness and technical virtuosity, often seemed outside the control of its inhabitants, even alien to men. It began to seem to us that there was here an underlying and more basic theme: the necessity of making the dwelling environment a human world. We found that we shared a sense that what makes an environment right for man is more than either its aesthetic qualities or its technical appropriateness or even a combination of the two: that it is important also that an environment respond to us, that we have been able to make it ours. In this view, the means of making and controlling are tied together in experience with their physical product, and aesthetic judgments are and must be penetrated by human meanings and relevances. As a friend wrote to one of us, the point of view is *that the world of art and the world of society are not separate, that there is only one world in which we all live and in which all our activities take place. . . our sense of any single activity can only be made rational by our sense of the whole.* This requires us to look at the city, its neighbourhoods and its dwellings, as not simply artifacts and/or as the format of human activity, but as the vehicle and expression of our human life which, being human, is also communal, in the Greek sense, political.

This is easy to see in the squatter settlement, which is why we began seeing it in that, and why we begin this issue with an analysis of squatter settlements. We looked, then, for instances where something analogous to the squatter settlement, in vitality and human response-ability was happening in the developed societies we knew. We did find instances, and a few we have reported here—not as a survey but as illustrations of our theme. We also found ways in which our very technical and managerial development stands in the way of an environment which responds to man. We tried to consider how that technical capacity might be turned to more human account. Finally, we tried to consider how our concern might suggest changes in the practice of architecture and the training of architects and planners.

We know that we have made only a beginning. We hope others will follow.