



## 2.0 FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

There is an extensive planning literature and tradition which stresses issues of allocation. In the social planning field the language of allocation talks about needs and resources, the latter generally taken to mean services or income. In traditional urban planning language, the emphasis is on the allocation of general and specific uses. This approach prohibits and prescribes the locations of functions, with limited concerns for the ways in which functions are translated into living forms.

Both traditional approaches to social and urban planning reflect macro-environmental and homeostatic concepts of residential planning. They are macro-environmental in that both approaches seek to designate and locate appropriate functions or services, with less concern about the relationships of the forms which arise therefrom to other forms in the setting or to the range of persons or groups for whom the functions or services might be intended. The approaches are homeostatic in that they respond to what is immediately evident, with less emphasis on projecting capacities to adapt or change to a range of possibilities over time.

The limitations of the traditional approaches have come to be increasingly recognized in both fields. The theme of human services co-ordination is one response to fragmented and unrelated forms of service. The extensive development of smaller scale community-based services in the seventies attempts to overcome the anonymity and impersonal qualities of institutional service provision in local areas. The pursuits of affinity relationships in service provision was identified in the Council's report In Search of a Framework as:

".... the perception that a service provider possesses a unique set of characteristics that are important to the consumer ..... where potential users assess their state of personal identity with the provider as a condition for using the service. Affinity factors can be the religious values of the provider, or life style, or language environment" <sup>8</sup>

Similar recognitions of the micro-environment have begun to emerge in the urban planning field. The

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R.M. Novick, In Search of a Framework, Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, January 1976, P.106

rediscovery of the neighbourhood as a significant locus of social experience, the emphasis on participation and a sense of place, the new status of network and location theory, imply strong affirmations for the social elements of environmental relatedness.

These themes were more directly expressed by the architect Hester upon returning from a visit to a neighbourhood park which he had designed at an earlier time. He observed:

"Whereas I was concerned about 'hardware', how the forms looked, how materials connected and weathered, and how circulation worked, the users were concerned about being safe, being with their friends, expressing anger, or controlling their turf. Simply stated, whether or not a person went to the park depended much more on who else was there than on the physical design of the park itself. It was this fact that I had misunderstood." <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> R.T. Hester, Jr., Neighbourhood Space, Douden, Hutchison and Ross Inc., Stradsburg, Penn. 1975, P.1

There is less reason to believe that people fragment the environment into physical and social resources in their uses and perceptions. There is limited recognition of these elements in the development of physical and social resources. Walking enables one to visit the bank, the library and to strike up casual conversations. A grocery store with Italian, Chinese or Spanish wording on the front is more than a source of provisions, especially if one is an immigrant. The presence of the wording "community school" on a building does not necessarily lead to social integration or public forms of community life. The library is seen as a place to borrow books, a recreation centre is for organized leisure, front door areas are for entry and exit, retail centres for the efficient transaction of goods and services. There is the strong and explicit assumption that daily life is the orderly performance of a hierarchy of specialized tasks and unrelated functions.

Needs are rarely as discreet or categorical as formal planning systems have made them out to be. In its recent statement of planning principles, the Social Planning Council contends that the need to co-ordinate human services in Metropolitan Toronto is not for the purpose of creating administrative and political coherence

between specialized service systems, but to create more adequate responses to needs and the ways in which needs are experienced by different groups of people.

The Council notes that human services co-ordination should ultimately be based on the recognition that:

"... needs cannot be readily isolated from the total life situation of the persons, group, or community for whom a particular social benefit is intended." <sup>10</sup>

Thus, the alternative to the concept of discreet and specialized needs is the concept of relational needs.

The Council further observes that the mere presence of a service in the community does not ensure that a social benefit has been provided. The Council states that:

"a human services program becomes a fully conferred benefit only when it is readily available, and appropriate in character,

to the conditions of the persons, group, or community for whom it is intended."

The contention by the Council is that social benefits are fully conferred only when appropriate service relationships have come to be established and maintained over time between the sources of social benefits and the subjects of social benefits.

The critical elements of relational needs and service relationships takes us far beyond allocative approaches to planning, with their emphasis on securing and locating resources or services. Implicit in the concept of relationships are a number of important propositions:

(a) what is expected from a resource or service, and how a resource or service is used, will vary in a community particularly where there is significant social, cultural, and life stage diversity among residents. Using the local park once more as an illustration, the same setting can mean many things to people. For those whose work life is harried, the local park might be seen as a place for specialized leisure or as a retreat in which to get away from people and experience the serenity

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<sup>10</sup> Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Aiming at the Eighties; Human Services Development, June 1978, P. 7-9

of open space. To an elderly person who has been home alone much of the day, the local park may be an important setting in which to observe and experience some form of social contact. The mother of a young child requires a setting which is within reasonable accessibility from home, if there is no car available. Thus, the local park is expected to respond to a range of related social and physical needs.

(b) patterns of demand on resources and services in the residential environment will in large measure be related to levels of primary dependence on the residential environment. Persons and groups with access to primary environments outside of the residential community will tend to make more focused and specialized demands on local resources and services. Persons and groups for whom the residential environment is the primary source of dependence will seek to maximize the attainment of multiple support needs - both formal and informal - in their uses of resources and services.

For those who are employed full-time in the labour force, the workplace becomes an alternative

primary environment which confers important social benefits such as identity, attachment, reciprocity, and care. This is also the case for those who study full-time, possess an active life of voluntary service in the general community, pursue special cultural or leisure interests, or have other forms of sustaining community and personal affiliations. These groups can be said to possess multi-environmental access. The residential environment can be transcended or by-passed if it does not yield many of the essential benefits associated with daily life.

It is quite different however for those persons and groups outside of the labour force, not in full-time study, and not otherwise engaged outside the residential area in sustaining forms of affiliation and involvement. Dependence is intensified when opportunities for informal contact and support of family, friends, and acquaintances are closed off as well. For these groups, the forms of social and physical support available within the residential environment is critical. If the environment only yields some of the basic elements of daily living - food, shelter, protection, opportunities for self-maintenance - with only infrequent or irregular forms of sustaining social contact and affiliation, then acute social isolation can and does set in. Social isolation can induce stress and a whole

range of self-destructive behaviours and activity.

Primary dependence on the residential environment can arise because of: (1) age (elderly, young children), (2) work role (full-time parenting mothers), (3) social condition (unemployed, ill, handicapped, infirm, etc.), (4) inadequate income (lack of private forms of mobility, the inability to buy into alternative environments).

(c) the range of benefits which a resource or service comes to offer in a residential environment will in large measure reflect those interests with effective forms of collective representation. Interests are primarily shared expressions of needs, or alternatively, expressions of needs by people in effective relationship with others.

In the absence of locally-based voluntary agencies and social interest groups, the environmental needs of minorities without collective forms of economic or political influence will receive limited priority. Thus the absence of parks in a local area responding to the needs of the elderly, mothers with young children, or youth - where these groups clearly exist in reasonable

numbers - will tend to indicate that there are few locally-based voluntary agencies and social interest groups in the area.

(d) the physical environment can influence the ways in which needs are experienced, or it can create alternative sets of needs. It can shape the functions which services are expected to perform, or alternatively limit the capacities of resources and services to meet stated objectives.

The recent trend toward deinstitutionalization represents the recognition that the physical environment in which support is offered can influence the usefulness of the benefit provided. The relationship of a physical environment to the general community conveys powerful social messages to people.

Institutional settings in which daily life is experienced - whether a treatment centre, home for the aged, or public housing development - state explicitly or implicitly to inhabitants that they do not possess the ability or capacity to sustain independent forms of daily life and experience in the general community. Counselling and therapy programs which seek to promote the confidence of institutional residents that they

can transcend their limitations, are contradicted by the messages of the environment.

Deinstitutionalization is a support strategy which recognizes that access to diverse forms of social and physical relationships are important sources of self-esteem and support. Isolation is the experienced absence of sustained and informal forms of social contact and environmental experience. Low density sprawl for residents who are transit dependent can lead to institutional experiences of isolation and removal. It led Hitchcock to suggest at a recent Social Planning Council Seminar that for many groups, public transit may in fact be an important social service, directly conferring important forms of support by enabling diverse forms of social contact to occur.<sup>11</sup>

(e) time is an important element in the evolving relationships of needs.

People do not remain fixed at one particular stage of the life cycle, nor within one set of living

arrangements. Human and social growth is the experience of development and transition. Young children become adolescents, full-time parenting mothers find one day that they have become women with grown children, spouses pass away and the widowed partner faces a life on her/his own.

Living patterns also change. The influences which modify living patterns are deeply embedded in the culture and economy of the society. Residential environments are not immune to these influences. Physical distance from what are perceived to be the sources of these influences can temporarily buffer, or selectively filter, the timing and impact of these influences. But eventually changes do penetrate, and in so penetrating, they quietly transform established personal and social patterns.

These influences are most evident in: (1) the shifting structures of family life, (2) the diversification of women's roles, (3) the emergence of adolescents as a self-aware cultural and consumer class, (4) the proliferation of increasingly acceptable adult life-style alternatives, also implicit in concepts of deinstitutionalization, (5) the extension of the human life span for a majority of the population to ages 75 and beyond, and the emerging self-awareness by the elderly of common social interests.

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<sup>11</sup> J. Hitchcock, "Environmental Fit: Perspectives on Residential Planning", Urban Seminar Five: Social Objectives and Urban Planning, June 1978 (Publication released January 1979), P.4.

More recent developments, the influence of which will soon be quite evident, include ongoing levels of high youth and young adult unemployment, new concepts of child welfare evident in the renewed emphasis on parenting and the social rights of children, the emerging scarcities of industrial and human energy sources.

The significance of the micro-environment has come to be recognized in the more developed thinking of urban sociologists such as Michelson and Popenoe.<sup>11</sup> Michelson speaks of assessing the capacity of environments to "accommodate" to a range of life stages, life situations, and life styles. Popenoe introduces the concept of "environmental fit" to describe the relationship of people and residential communities.

"Accommodation" and "fit" refer to the capacities of residential environments to respond and adapt to the range of support needs of people who live, or may come to live, in a community over time.

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<sup>11</sup> W. Michelson, Man and His Urban Environment, revised edition, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Mass., 1976.  
D. Popenoe, The Suburban Environment, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977.

The allocative approach to planning assumed continued levels of population and economic growth. Responses to changing needs largely meant adding on resources or services to what already existed.

There are two problems with this approach. Adding on is a costly way to deal with existing inadequacies. If inefficient uses of land lead to pockets of dispersed and isolated elderly, then one can either add-on a para-transit program to facilitate mobility or address the issues around the more efficient use of land. If fee-for-service recreation programming excludes large numbers of moderate income groups, one can either open up new agencies to serve these groups or restructure existing ones.

In an economy with sustained growth, a portion of the surpluses can be directed to adding on. In a slow growth economy add-ons become a serious drain on the limited resources of the community which might be required to respond to legitimate gaps in available support (e.g. pre-school parenting support). For example, we know that unemployment is one of the most destructive influences on family stability and child welfare. We can face the family employment issues directly, or

continue to add-on inordinately costly rehabilitation, treatment, and corrections programs.

The second problem with add-ons is that even when more is offered, there is little assurance that basic support needs have been adequately addressed. Doubling the number of job placement offices in the community will not necessarily compensate for the absence of jobs.

Adaptive planning recognizes that there is the need to selectively redevelop what already exists; to modify and update the relationship of physical and social resources to the changing needs of people through various stages of development and transition over time. Adaptive planning requires a continued and sensitive monitoring of emerging social development patterns, how social groups and needs are distributed in a large urban environment, which groups have high levels of dependence on the residential environment. It means moving away from rigid physical environments and institutional services which cannot readily adopt when required.

The purpose of the Social Planning Council project is not to judge the suburban form, but to assess the

capacity of Metro's suburbs to adapt to new realities. Implicit in this approach is the recognition that the suburbs, like people, cannot be frozen in time. What made sense in light of historical, social and economic conditions twenty-five years ago or ten years ago, might be less meaningful in light of current and emerging social changes. The process of adaptation, however, if it is to be productive, should recognize the unique traditions and achievements which are incorporated in the suburban form. It is for this reason that the background report includes a brief historical perspective on the origins of the post-war suburbs.



### 3.0 SUBURBAN PERSPECTIVES

There are a number of historical perspectives on the evolution of the post-war suburbs. Most of these perspectives stress the relationship of the modern suburb to changes in forms of transportation, the pursuit of home ownership, the economics of land development, the retreat to pastoral forms of life, the affirmation of localism. Invariably all of these elements are present, and influenced the ways in which post-war suburbs evolved.

There are distinct periods of suburban development which can be linked to the introduction of new transportation technologies.<sup>12</sup> Prior to the electrification of surface transit, the residential city was in large measure defined by the limits of horsepower. Within Toronto this meant that high density development extended within a semi-circle of about two miles.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> B. Schwartz (ed.), The Changing Face of the Suburbs, University of Chicago Press, 1976, P. 99-109.

<sup>13</sup> Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, Official Plan of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area, 1959, P. 5.

With the electrification of street railways from 1885 - 1914, development in Metro extended east-west along rail lines and along Yonge Street to the north. Smaller settlements such as Mimico and Weston, previously served by steam railroads, were linked up. This facilitated the subsequent development of areas between these settlements and the City. The introduction of the private automobile took place between the two wars. Its impact was not fully felt in this period, although more scattered forms of development began to take place. Much of this development extended along major traffic arteries feeding out from the central area - Lakeshore, Dundas, and more particularly Yonge Street.

While the period before World War Two was one of gradual movement of suburban settlements away from the centre, it is subsequent to World War Two, (what this report refers to as the post-war period) that very high levels of urban settlement growth occurred in Metro and throughout North America. The scale of this growth can be seen in Table 2. In the period from 1951 to 1971, the number of municipalities in Ontario with population 10,000 and over which came into existence, just about equalled the number of municipalities which had developed in the previous 60 years. The number of people living

in municipalities in Ontario grew in this period by over 3 million. Almost one-third of this growth occurred in Metropolitan Toronto.

Table 2  
Urban Growth in Ontario 1871-1971

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population of Province</u>	<u>No. of Urban Mun. 10,000+</u>	<u>Total Pop'n in Urban Mun. 10,000+</u>	<u>% of Ontario Population</u>
1871	1,620,851	5	132,586	8.2%
1891	2,114,321	10	363,134	16.7%
1911	2,527,292	18	812,179	32.1%
1931	3,431,683	34	1,688,126	49.2%
1951	4,597,542	45	2,535,656	55.1%
1971	7,703,110	83	5,684,613	73.8%

Source: L.D. Feldman, Ontario 1945-1973: The Municipal Dynamic, Ontario Economic Council, P. 7.

Where built-up city environments already existed, as in Metro, suburban development was the predominant form of urban growth in the 1951-1971 period.

There is little doubt that a history of this twenty-year period should include a review of the economics of land development and housing production. Sewell has provided one such recent review.<sup>14</sup> The post-war period saw the emergence of industrial forms of land assembly and development, formally justified by community planners as a means to quickly increase supply and secure the integration of housing with surrounding residential elements. Public policy encouraged this trend, and financed demand through government-issued mortgages to increase opportunities for home ownership. The production of housing also came to be seen as a strategy to promote post-war employment objectives. The public role in post-war housing was inherently Keynesian. Governments, through fiscal and infrastructure incentives, primed private production, provided residual forms of housing, but in keeping with Keynesian principles, did not interfere with the structure of market forces that arose therefrom. The creation of orderly, stable, and predictable private housing markets was a cornerstone of public policy at all three government levels.

<sup>14</sup> J. Sewell, Where the Suburbs Came From in J. Lorimer, E. Ross (ed.), The Second City Book, James Lorimer & Company, Toronto, 1977.

Government housing production was directed to those families and individuals unable, by virtue of income limitations even with public subsidies, to buy into the private housing market. In a housing review conducted in 1943, the City of Toronto concluded that lower income families with children, where there was only one source of income in the household (i.e. no lodgers, extended family, or children at work) would be most vulnerable to exclusion from the private market.<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting to note, in light of current views on the nature of women as secondary wage-earners, that there was clear recognition in this report that for many families, access to market forms of housing would require a second source of income in the household. It is not surprising to observe in more recent times that as households seek privacy, with lodging and secondary family patterns largely eliminated, and as children are encouraged to remain in school through secondary and post-secondary programs, mothers begin to emerge as the substitute source of a second household income to secure family accessibility to private market housing.

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<sup>15</sup> Report of the City Council's Survey Committee on Housing Conditions in Toronto 1942-43, City of Toronto, P.9

The adoption of a Keynesian approach to the development of land and the production of housing in the rapid growth period following the war, along with a residual, regulative, and priming role for the public sector, was consistent with prevailing patterns throughout the Canadian economy. It was also consistent, and in some areas continues to be consistent, with the public role in other important social development areas - formerly, health and hospital care; currently, pensions, job creation, day care, home support for the elderly. Once having handed the job over to the market sector, and having encouraged corporate patterns of assembly and production, there is little doubt that land development forms eventually come to reflect the logic inherent in the operation of large-scale market forces. These patterns include: (1) piecemeal forms of development leading to dispersion, reflecting the state of private land holdings and their timing for release; (2) excessive pricing of private housing to the limits of discretionary family income, and the consequent limits placed on available public revenue to finance important community services; (3) entrenchment of the retail function and retail centres as the primary public meeting places for community life; (4) displacement of small owner-managed and specialty enterprises often with local identities and attachments, by chain forms of retailing and service provision; (5) enhancement of defensive and

ornamental influences, in large measure an outgrowth of the imperatives of marketing and promotion; (6) progressive elimination of accessibility to low-rise housing for average income families with young children.

These descriptions reflect the way in which market forces gave concrete expression to the suburban form in the post-war period. They do not, however, bring us any closer to understanding why this form of human settlement came to dominate, why it appealed primarily to groups with one common life situation, and what might have prompted large numbers of adult men and women to remain in the setting at enormous personal investment and sacrifice.

Clark in his review of metropolitan suburban development in the early sixties notes that early settlers did not primarily include the rich, the elderly, the childless, the religiously devout, and those with extensive kinship ties.<sup>16</sup> New developments were primarily settled by people under 45, before or soon after the birth of a second child. Couples started out in a city flat, followed by a move to larger rented quarters on the birth of the first child.

Early settlers did not bring with them strong urban attachments. The primary loyalties were to family life and the associations formed through work and childhood.

While there were suburban areas that attracted more financially secure residents, Clark notes that suburban society was largely a debtor society. Families came with no large store of economic goods or assets. Suburbanization frequently meant living at the precipice of debt and deprivation. The family dwelling was not seen as a source of short or middle-term financial gain. If there was a gain, it was in the enhancement of personal living. The demands placed on public services were limited. The primary concern was to keep municipal taxes low so that they did not become an unbearable strain on already tight budgets.

Some traditional perspectives on the post-war suburbs suggest that adults sought personal forms of fulfillment through home ownership and the drive for open space.<sup>17</sup> There is little reason to doubt that these were important influences. Nevertheless the Clark interviews, and those

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<sup>16</sup> S.D. Clark, The Suburban Society, University of Toronto Press, 1966, P. 82-141.

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<sup>17</sup> D. Thorns, Suburbia, Granada Publishing, St. Albans, 1972, P. 111-125.

reported by Thorns, indicate that the experiences of daily living arising from home ownership and open space did not necessarily lead to direct forms of adult fulfilment. Both Clark and Thorns describe the already familiar pattern of deep isolation and loneliness experienced by women - loneliness for friends left behind in the cities, the absence of adult friends with whom to share common interests, the loss of opportunities for discretionary activity outside the home as would be available in the City.

For men post-war suburban living meant submitting themselves to the rigors of mortgage discipline. It meant the daily experiences of commuting, maintaining the security of employment in light of heavy financial obligations, and frequently having to perform a range of household maintenance functions on evenings and week-ends. While there is no suggestion that these were necessarily unbearable rigors, they did involve a willingness by men to assume financial anxieties, and a commitment to pursue predictable and productive patterns of daily life, often resulting in the limited availability of discretionary time for independent adult pursuits.

For many adult men and women, early experiences of suburban living introduced significant levels of role coercion, in which adult forms of diversion were postponed. These were years of investment and sacrifice - but for what. Those who would argue that home ownership has traditionally been seen as a protection for old age should explain why this investment was made in the suburbs rather than the city; particularly in light of the financial and social deprivations which the suburban investment meant.

More recent interpretations stress the affinities of suburban settlers for "localism" and "homogeneity" - a desire to return to the more intimate scales of small town life.<sup>18</sup> These are reasonable propositions, but why was the move not made by individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and stages of family life. Of particular interest is the social homogeneity of those who originally moved out.

Fisher has questioned more recently whether localism and homogeneity grew out of rather than preceded the suburban

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<sup>18</sup> S.F. Fava, Beyond Suburbia, *Annals*-422, November 1975  
and  
S. Donaldson, The Suburban Myth, Columbia University Press, New York 1969.

experience.<sup>19</sup> Localism arose through the need to rely upon a small pool of neighbourhood associates for mutual support. Dispersion and distance meant that family and childhood friends were no longer accessible for daily support and contact. Low density reduced the size of the pool for the formation of social ties. Localism might be another way of describing responses to isolation. Homogeneity reflected the pursuit of compatible qualities in the scarce pool which was available for social ties and mutual support.

It might well be that compact forms of settlement, by significantly extending the choice of ties and support available to individuals, increase the receptivity to levels of residential heterogeneity.

Perhaps there are other perspectives which identify the origins and appeal of the post-war suburbs. These perspectives would suggest that there are historical and cultural dimensions to consider which complements and perhaps transcend land-use and transportation frameworks. In this view modes of production and opportunities

for increased mobility expand the boundaries of adaption and choice - they do not necessarily explain why certain adaptations or choices are eventually made.

It is questionable whether adaptations or choices which came to be made were primarily as a result of or messages of the moment. Adaptation and choice patterns are rarely linear or sequential. Emery and Trist suggest that social patterns may have already broken through the institutional frameworks of the society before they are fully recognized.<sup>20</sup>

Carver has recently given credence to this view in commenting on the rapid urban growth of the post-war period:

"Nobody really believed that there was going to be a spectacular growth of urban Canada after a demoralizing fifteen years of depression and brutal war. So there was not any practical perception of a framework for a new society, in a new habitat."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> C. S. Fischer, Networks and Places, The Free Press, New York, 1977, P. 136.

<sup>20</sup> F. E. Emery, E. L. Trist, Towards a Social Ecology, Plenum Press, New York, 1973, P. 57-67.

<sup>21</sup> H. Carver, Building the Suburbs: A Planner's Reflections, City Magazine, September 1978, P. 42.

The frameworks and perceptions adapted in the post-war period were developed much earlier in time. They reflect in large measure responses to the social experiences and images of urban life deeply embedded in the culture. The fifteen year period of depression and brutal war which Carver refers to, intensified the demand for new alternatives. The principles underlying the alternatives had been largely articulated and given formal expression in the decades before. There is a developed history of the physical design principles which influenced the shape of the post-war suburbs. What is often missing is an appreciation for the important social development principles which are embedded in the suburban form. Social development principles refer to the ways in which the physical environment was arranged to accommodate what were people's aspirations for experiences and opportunities of daily life. A preliminary recognition of these principles can be useful in understanding and assessing the present state of social development in Metro's post-war suburbs.

To trace the origins of the social development perspective, it is necessary to return to the turn of the century. Large-scale immigration into urban centres intensified the state of congestion and upheaval which had already characterized the 19th century industrial city.

As Katz points out, contrary to current images of neighbourhood rootedness, for the vast majority of residents 19th century city life was the experience of transience and physical inequality.<sup>22</sup> Uncertainties around employment contributed to the instabilities of daily life for individuals and families. People often moved around in relation to work, and this mitigated against the development of rootedness whether in the household, neighbourhood or general community. Inequality translated itself into sharp distinctions in political patterns and processes. Governing social, political, and economic interests were closely knit together, creating an urban society in which a small percentage commanded a near monopoly of resources necessary for community well-being.

The experienced squalor and deterioration of 19th and early 20th century city life for many people contributed to the shaping of an urban image, which in turn helped shape perceptions of an alternative. Enclosure 4 conveys physical elements of the urban image

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M.B. Katz, The People of a Canadian City in G.A. Steeter, A.F. Artibise, The Canadian City, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1977, P. 227-235.



Source:  
Ministry of Housing,  
Government of  
Ontario

which emerged and persisted through the post-war years for large numbers of people. Elements include mud, refuse, congestion, the threat of disease, concealed and unsupervised space encouraging deviance and promoting feelings of insecurity, children without supervision engaged in destructive activity, irregular forms of accommodation, (e.g. basements) making it possible for transients to live in the area, commercial functions within the residential area drawing in strangers, traffic, and intensifying the sense of turbulence and unease in one's daily life.

Riis, a New York City journalist, was one of the first 19th century photographers of North America's urban slums. His responses to the daily experience of reporting on social life in these areas reveals some elements of what were eventually societal responses to these conditions. One notorious slum in New York City, Mulberry Bend, was torn down in 1886 and transformed into a park. Riis observes:

"The Mulberry Bend we laid by the heels; that was the worse pigsty of all ... It is now five years since the Bend became a park and the police reporter has not had business there during that time; not once

has a shot been fired or a knife been drawn. That is what it means to let the sunlight in!" (emphasis added)<sup>23</sup>

Eventually Riis could no longer tolerate daily exposure to slum living:

"The deeper I burrowed in the slum, the more my thoughts turned, by a sort of defensive instinct, to the country ... So before the next winter's snows we were snug in the house ... with a ridge of wooded hills, the 'backbone of Long Island, between New York and us. The very lights of the city were shut out. So was the slum, and I could sleep."  
(emphasis added)

The response to congestion and disorder was the longing for distance and simplicity. Anxiety over physical proximity was not only a concern of those with

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<sup>23</sup> A. Alland Sr., Jacob A. Riis: Photographer and Citizen, Aperture Books, New York City 1974, P. 210 and 212.

exposure to, or experience of, slum living. It should be remembered that even in the forties and fifties communicable disease remained a major source of fear for the well-being of children as well as adults. The recent outbreak of polio last summer in Ontario reminded many of the anxiety that can develop over contact with strangers and the use of public places when fear of an outbreak exists. Parenthetically one might speculate on the extent to which public health achievements in the control of communicable disease have made possible the return to compact living in the centre of cities such as Toronto. There is less reason to fear who one's neighbours might be when settling into an area in transition.

The period around the turn of the century (1890-1920) saw the emergence in North America of the settlement house and neighbourhood workers' movement. In contrast to friendly "visitors" of the charity movement, the settlement house movement led to the establishment of local centres staffed in large measure by those who chose to "settle" in the areas to be improved. The settlement house movement became involved in the total life of the community, from the provision of direct services to the initiation of municipal action programs to upgrade the area. This included the formulation of demands for improved municipal services - sanitation, public health, protection - and assistance to

residents to increase their influence on the local political process.

The wide range of concerns that settlement house and neighbourhood workers became involved in moved them into broader social development perspectives. These perspectives were reinforced with the emergence of community sociology in North America. These trends were most pronounced in Chicago with the emergence of Hull House as an important leader in the settlement house movement, and the University of Chicago as a major centre of social science research. The scientific study of community developed alongside the service insights derived from neighbourhood development work.

Broader social development themes arising from the interaction of these two elements were quite evident in the fifty-first annual session of the National Council of Social Work held in Toronto in 1924. Important social questions and perspectives had been developed in relation to prevailing patterns of neighbourhood life.

Burgess cited the need to examine the inability of city neighbourhoods to contain their young. He stressed the relationship between promiscuity, deviance, and movement out of the neighbourhood into the commercial amusement areas

of the larger city. These "bright light" attractions included motion pictures, theatres and dance halls. In contrast, Burgess described the village type of neighbourhood as an environment:

"...where everyone knows everyone else, the social relationships of the young people were safeguarded by the primary controls of group opinion."<sup>24</sup> P. 409

Burgess was quite emphatic in rejecting the influence of existing forms of city life on the young:

"The total effect of forces of city life, like mobility and promiscuity, upon the neighbourhood and upon our traditional culture seems to be subversive and disorganizing." (emphasis added) P. 409

A major source of anxiety for Burgess was the inability of neighbourhood settlement houses and community centres to sustain the interest of the young, who were "deserting" the

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24 E. W. Burgess, Can Neighbourhood Work Have a Scientific Basis in Proceedings of the Fifty-First Annual Session of the National Conference of Social Work (1924) University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1924 P. 406-410.

centres and "thronging" to the commercial areas.

It is not too difficult to understand the power of these themes in framing and shaping adult perceptions. Loss of control by adults over the behaviour of the young was associated with opportunities for urban mobility. Neighbourhood services were not compensating for the stimulation of city life. If services in the existing neighbourhood environment did not work, the other approach was to lay out the principles of an alternative neighbourhood environment in which mobility and promiscuity might be contained.

These principles were spelled out at the same conference by Clarence Perry of the Russell Sage Foundation. He described the qualities that would constitute an ideal neighbourhood from a social point of view. The Russell Sage Foundation was a major funder of social welfare research and practise in the United States, and a leading centre of social welfare concern and activity. The presentation by Perry was not an incidental event. The foundation subsequently participated in incorporating Perry's "neighbourhood unit" concept into the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs from 1922-1932.<sup>25</sup> Given the Foundation's central role in the

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25 J. C. Colcord, Your Community, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1939, P. 83.

social welfare field, Perry's principles drew from the collective insight and experience of the settlement house and neighbourhood workers movement.

The full reproduction of the Perry presentation in 1924 is included in this report as Appendix 2. Perry is quite clear that the purpose of the presentation is to spell out guidelines for the social control of urban growth. He defined this as:

"...the kind of urban expansion which will satisfy social objectives..." (emphasis added)

P. 420

The principles for neighbourhood design which flow from Perry's social objectives are:

- \* location of the elementary school at the civic centre of the district along with a branch of the public library, an assembly area for the school and the community, a motion picture theatre, and church;
- \* concentration of the commercial function into shopping centres located at the periphery, where residents move from home to work;
- \* business buildings only to be allowed in

- shopping districts and not in any part of the neighbourhood;
- \* shopping centres for different neighbourhoods would form an intersection, serving as a local trading centre;
- \* a range of playing areas for sport activity to be distributed in such a way to promote accessibility but avoid the concentration of sporting crowds in any one locality;
- \* setback space of the junction of streets, called "breathing spots";
- \* family backyards in which small children may play, or alternatively, local playgrounds;
- \* arterial highways of 100 feet or more in width to serve as boundaries for the district; interior streets to be preferably curvilinear with through traffic discouraged;
- \* developments should be designed to attract homogeneous income groupings;
- \* apartments to be located at the periphery;
- \* an ideal density of seven families per acre.

Perry suggests that these objectives are less likely to be achieved if there are fragmented forms of neighbourhood development. He calls for an integrated process of develop-

ment, where all of the parts would appropriately fit into the whole and thereby meet the stated social objectives. Perry suggests that integrated forms of development could be encouraged if municipalities would:

"...grant substantial privileges and extra latitude to those real estate developers whose plans and schemes do meet standards of an ideal character."

(emphasis added) P. 421

Thus developers with large land holdings were seen as potential sources of progress in the promotion of social objectives in neighbourhood planning. Perry's interest was not the advocacy of profits but the pursuit of better living environments. The ability to control all the elements of design by having to regulate only one producer was seen as a distinct advantage.

Perry's design focuses the scale of the neighbourhood around the elementary school. This is justified with the contention that:

"Since the public school, more nearly than any other local institution, touches all families within its sphere of service, it is a common denominator of neighbourhood life and seems

therefore the best available basis for determining the size of the local community unit." P. 419

Implicit in Perry's assumptions is that the proposed alternative neighbourhood would be primarily comprised of families with younger children. When assessed cumulatively, the Perry principles spell out ideal sets of physical and social conditions for the protection, supervision, development, and rearing of children. The proposed form of the environment represents the spatial configuration of functions designed to create a self-sufficient setting, reducing the desire or likelihood of children leaving the neighbourhood or district. The school is at the centre of the community, as is the motion picture house; the neighbourhood is to contain backyards and public areas for play; the possibility of contact with strangers is severely limited; commercial influences are at the periphery and out of sight; the neighbourhood is to be enclosed by distinctive elements such as a wide arterial, railway tracks, parkways, or parks.

It is not sufficient to describe these settings in general terms such as family environments, for it is a particular form of family function that is most clearly highlighted - the raising of young children. The social development emphasis in the ideal neighbourhood is distinct: an

alternative urban environment is proposed designed to function as a specialized setting for parenting and child development.

Similar design features are evident in Clarence Stein's "Radburn Plan" of 1928. Carver cites Radburn as a landmark in the pursuit of better living. It is a town turned outside-in, where living space faces the open green spaces of the centre. The stated principles in this design are for "better living": privacy, separation of people from vehicles and pedestrians, enhancement of green space, the pursuit of an aesthetic whole.<sup>26</sup>

One need not suggest that any formulation of principles, whether social or physical, were formative. What should be noted is that social development principles did exist, addressed seminal areas in people's lives (i.e. conditions for parenting and child development), were important elements of the converging influences through which the post-war suburban form took shape, and are critical to understanding the social significance and achievements of post-war suburban experiences.

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26 H. Carver, Cities in the Suburbs, University of Toronto Press, 1962, P. 39-41.

In examining suburban growth patterns of the post-war period, Carver makes two important observations:<sup>27</sup>

- (a) "Since the growth of suburbia went on at such a breath-taking pace, the first generation of suburban planners worked in a high pressure climate of emergency. And since Canada did not seem to have any obvious social concepts to guide urban design, most planners clung to the elementary school system as the one available and explainable concept to provide an organizational framework for suburban society."
  - (b) "The normal reaction of the wartime generation which went into the first post-war suburbs was: 'I'm just not going to get involved in missions. I've been indoctrinated every day of the bloody war. For God's sake just get me a house and leave me alone.' It was a period of disengagement; not of participatory engagement."
- If we introduce social ecology perspectives developed

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27 H. Carver, Building the Suburbs, ... op.cit.  
(a) P. 44; (b) P. 42.43.

by Emery and Trist,<sup>28</sup> Carver's observations can be reformulated by identifying common conditions of environment which then shape related adaptation patterns. The Perry model of the elementary school system was one response to a prolonged social experience of urban turbulence. Most adults who were early settlers of the post-war suburbs had sustained fifteen years of economic and political turbulence. Emery and Trist contend that where people undergo sustained periods of turbulence in their daily lives, corresponding patterns of social adaptation can become evident. Responses to turbulence in the environment can include:

(a) simplification of the worlds in which one functions. Simplification means reducing complexities in the environment to more manageable and understandable units of daily experience;

(b) the tendency to focus on those elements of personal living of enduring or immediate interest, and to exclude all others as sources of concern or attention. Emery and Trist refer to this as the process of segmentation;

(c) withdrawal from environments or experiences which invite or might lead to turbulence.

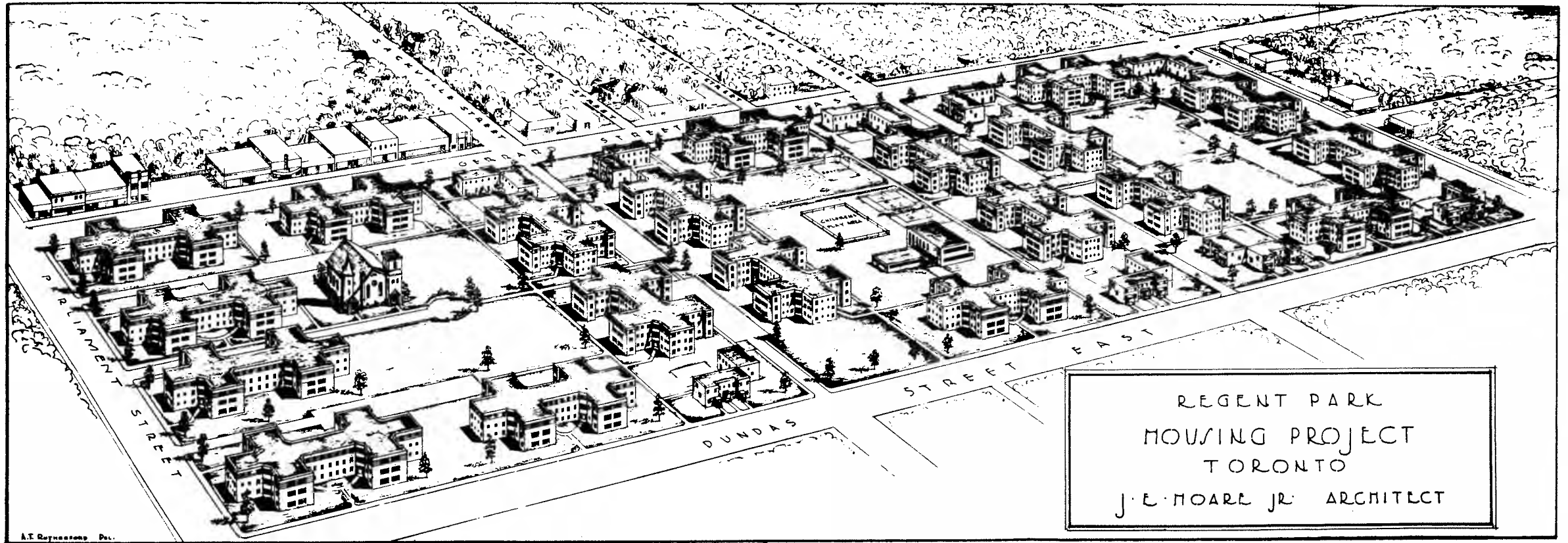
Patterns of adaptation to turbulence which Emery and Trist describe - simplification, segmentation, and withdrawal - are evident in the alternative residential environments which emerged in the post-war period.

Not all of the alternatives were developed in the suburbs of Metropolitan Toronto. Because of government's ability to assemble land in the built environment, post-war alternatives in the City of Toronto were public ventures. Enclosures 5 and 6 identify two of the alternatives which emerged - Regent Park and Alexandra Park. Both were public housing projects directed to low-income groups, organized and developed by the public interest sector of the community. Their forms reflect what were perceived to be important principles in designing alternative residential areas to the urban turbulence which had made these projects necessary.

Enclosure 5, which is the design plan for Regent Park, makes evident principles embedded in the project plan:

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28 F. E. Emery, E. L. Trist, Towards a Social Ecology, Plenum Press, New York, 1973, P. 57-67.



Source: A. Rose, Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance University of Toronto Press, 1958  
(Reproduced with the permission of the publisher and author.)



Source: Ministry of Housing,  
Government of Ontario

(1) limited penetration of the automobile into the neighbourhood, (2) removal of all commercial functions, (3) physical separation of housing units, (4) introduction of uncluttered open green space around the housing units, (5) relative uniformity of the housing stock, (6) large-scale clustered homogeneity by income, (7) an integrated process of planning and development by one authority. These were all principles which would be introduced into the large post-war suburban developments of Metro, starting with Don Mills.

The residential form of Regent Park incorporates the Emery-Trist forms of adaptation:

- (a) simplification, in the removal of the visual and physical clutter of traditional residential areas, replaced by open green space and access to sunlight;
- (b) segmentation, in the primary focus of the environment on accommodating the residential function;
- (c) withdrawal, in removing sources of turbulence from the environment such as the automobile, housing for transients, the commercial function.

The Alexandra Park project of Enclosure 6 is of interest, in that the environment was first developed in central Toronto and was then subsequently reproduced in the Jane-Finch area of North York. The internal principles governing both designs were similar - clean, uncluttered, and enclosed space set off from the general community. The differing locations - one in the compact and diverse centre of the City, the other in an isolated suburban concentration - create significant differences in how these environments can be used and/or experienced.

For large numbers of families able, with government assistance, to buy into the private housing market, school-centred suburban neighbourhoods were the residential settings in which new experiences of daily life became possible. The principles outlined by Perry found their formal expression in new sub-divisions and neighbourhoods. Disengagement or withdrawal from the general community came to be replaced by focused or segmented engagement in raising children. There were few formal centres to express common attachments - the local school symbolized the reproductive and life affirming adaptations of child rearing which took place in the face of war and depression.

Post-war suburbs extended significantly the social

opportunities for adults to raise young children in what were seen as highly desirable environments for parenting and child development. This is not only an historical perspective. It was the most persistent and strongly held affirmation of the suburban environment which emerged in project interviews with residents who were raising, or had raised, children in the setting. Respondents were prepared to admit that the physical environment might lack the colour and diversity of the City. But strong convictions were expressed that the suburbs were much more preferable places in which to raise younger children.

The suburban environment facilitated a new set of parenting opportunities. The physical separation from extended family, while removing supports for daily living, promoted increased joint-couple activity and responsibility for parenting. In the absence of the extended family new approaches to parenting could more readily be undertaken. This often included the replacement of traditionally authoritarian styles of family life with new approaches which emphasized consultation.<sup>29</sup>

Increased joint-couple responsibility served to

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29 Thorns, op. cit.

give new dimensions to male-female roles. There is evidence that role differentiation became somewhat modified, with men expected to assume more direct child rearing and household responsibilities. Women came to experience increased financial, home management, and community participation roles.

In much the same way that the spatial configuration of the neighbourhood was to be self sufficient and self-contained to accommodate the movement and activity of children, the suburban family home acquired a similar significance. It was to physically re-create and include a range of resources for the support of children and their parents, that hitherto would have either been unavailable to most families, or would have to be sought in the general community. The concentration of resources in the home was to promote joint family experiences and opportunities. It was to provide a protective and developmental environment for children, and later on a socializing environment for adolescents, under the watchful but not obtrusive supervision of parents.

It was the physical framework of the environment - both neighbourhood and home - which would include subtle but inclusive sets of social controls to promote the

appropriate development of children. If forms of movement and activity could be environmentally prescribed, this modified the need by adults to rely exclusively on authoritarian forms of parental control.

Enclosure 7 expresses these themes in popular form. The physical framework of the home environment is referred to as "the third parent". It confers a sense of order by what is facilitated, and, alternatively, by what is correspondingly discouraged. To see the suburban environment in pastoral images only, is to miss the deep and powerful social values and prescriptions which are embedded in the physical configurations of the home and the neighbourhood. In these configurations are built in important forms of support for parenting and child development. The suburban parent who opened up the front or back door of their house, felt reassured that the physical and social environment in which their child would move was supportive of parenting interests. It was even better when the child would be induced to engage in activities, or participate in experiences, within the protective environment of the home.

One might contrast this sense of reassurance with the experiences associated with city living. Sending a child out of the house, into the neighbourhood, meant

sustaining anxiety and fear over the experiences and situations which the child might encounter. The city environment was never consciously designed to accommodate the needs of parenting and child development. Nor was housing readily available to most families which could promote the developmental and protective objectives found in the suburban home. It was only elites who historically were able to withdraw into protected neighbourhoods north of Bloor Street, or into the eastern and western portions of the City, to acquire supportive arrangement which would facilitate child rearing. It was the suburban environment which made these opportunities accessible to the general population.

The unique achievement of the post-war suburbs was to create mainstream human settlements with an implicit emphasis on child welfare. Even the often ridiculed box-like structures of the suburban sub-division might have possessed more important meanings to its residents. For children, it conferred a sense of physical equality in their experience of growth and development; this, in distinct contrast to the daily perceptions and awareness of physical inequality conferred by traditional city environments. For adults, beyond the sense of physical equality, the suburban home introduced the opportunities to exercise

command over personal space. This experience goes beyond ownership; it represents the opportunity to organize the social and physical elements of one's life with minimal daily accountability to others. As will be evident later in the report, the pursuit of command over personal space is a major trend throughout Metro, taking a somewhat different form in the central urban area.

The ability to sustain the suburban environment in its original form required that certain assumptions and conditions could be met. This included: (1) the ability to preserve traditional family and child bearing patterns, (2) full-time parenting and community participation by the mother, (3) the ability to buy into low-rise family dwellings, (4) inexpensive forms of private transportation, (5) stable employment prospects if heavy mortgage obligations were to be met over time, (6) a secure price environment for the management of tight budgets, (7) the restraint of external influences on adolescent behaviour, (8) a willingness by adults to defer diversified forms of personal fulfilment.

There is considerable evidence to indicate that where these assumptions and conditions have been met, there have been, and continue to be, significant levels of satisfaction by established residents with their environments.<sup>30</sup>

This was borne out as well in project interviews. This satisfaction is substantiated in the research where, even with the difficult adaptations often required of women and men to function in the setting, there is little evidence to indicate that special forms of personal instability emerged in response to early experiences of isolation or role coercion. These patterns are quite significant, since there were wide variations in the backgrounds of family groups who settled in the suburbs during the active growth period. As Thorns points out not all groups came to the suburbs equally committed to the child-rearing focus which would emerge in their lives. For some the commitments came later over time. Nevertheless, the attachment to the environment as a result of historical experience remains real. As the prototype family of the early days gives way, there is evidence from this report and elsewhere, that established residents wish to remain in the environment even as life situations or life cycle stages change.

From a planning perspective, the questions are what happens when the assumptions and conditions which gave rise to the suburban environment begin to change, and in a number of areas change significantly.

# The Third Parent

In our time of changing standards and uncertain goals, conscientious parents are hard put to give their children a helpful set of values.

To tell children that honesty is the best policy and that industry will be rewarded is the easy beginning. Such principles are simple and clearly defined. Any child can recognize the difference between truth and falsehood, between doing a good job and "goofing off." That is not the problem.

... when it comes to teaching the young and inexperienced how to differentiate between true and phony beauty, between real and cheap culture, between civilized and shoddy living, between surface and meaningful endeavor, then the way is not always clear. Such intangibles as "values" and "attitudes" are difficult to put into words.

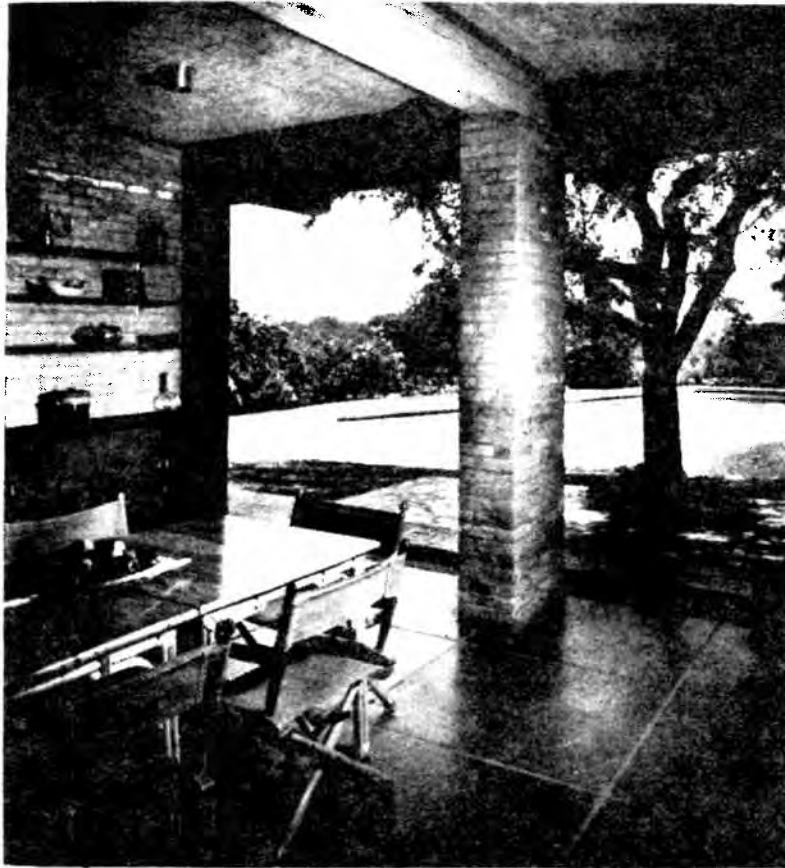
To complicate the problem further, children usually don't take kindly to parental lectures. They are too impatient, too sure of their own impulsive judgments and hasty decisions.

But a fine house that represents the thinking and taste of many talented people, as well as the personal choice of its owners, does express the parental ideal better than words. If the house combines beauty with shelter, peace with stimulation, then it becomes the third parent and speaks eloquently for the other two.

*The house in which children grow up is almost as much a parent to them as a father or a mother. With its all-pervading influences—both good and bad—a house helps shape values and set standards for the younger generation. In this respect a house is really a third parent*

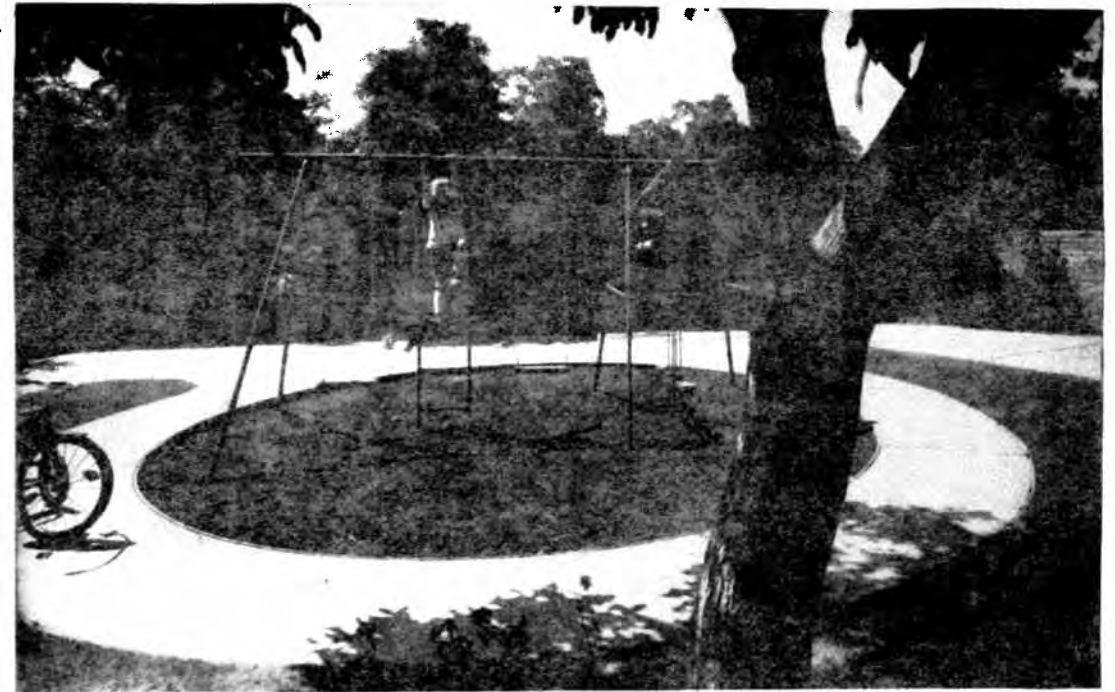


**Recreation begins and ends at home**, if appointments are as complete as in this "Casita." To keep their youngsters from leaving home for sports and companionship, yet avoid turning living room into a youth center, the Dewars built a playhouse near pool and badminton court. Wide open on one side, built of brick and concrete, it is ideal place to eat, dance, and even sit in wet swim suits. In bad weather sliding doors enclose front.



When youngsters reach the teen-age party and dance phase a house can help or hinder them in their first social venture. A house that takes kindly to awkward party guests is a great asset. One that has a terrace with an attractive aura of romance about it and where the parents' chaperonage is actual but not overbearing encourages teenagers in their first steps toward a wholesome understanding and interest in members of the opposite sex.

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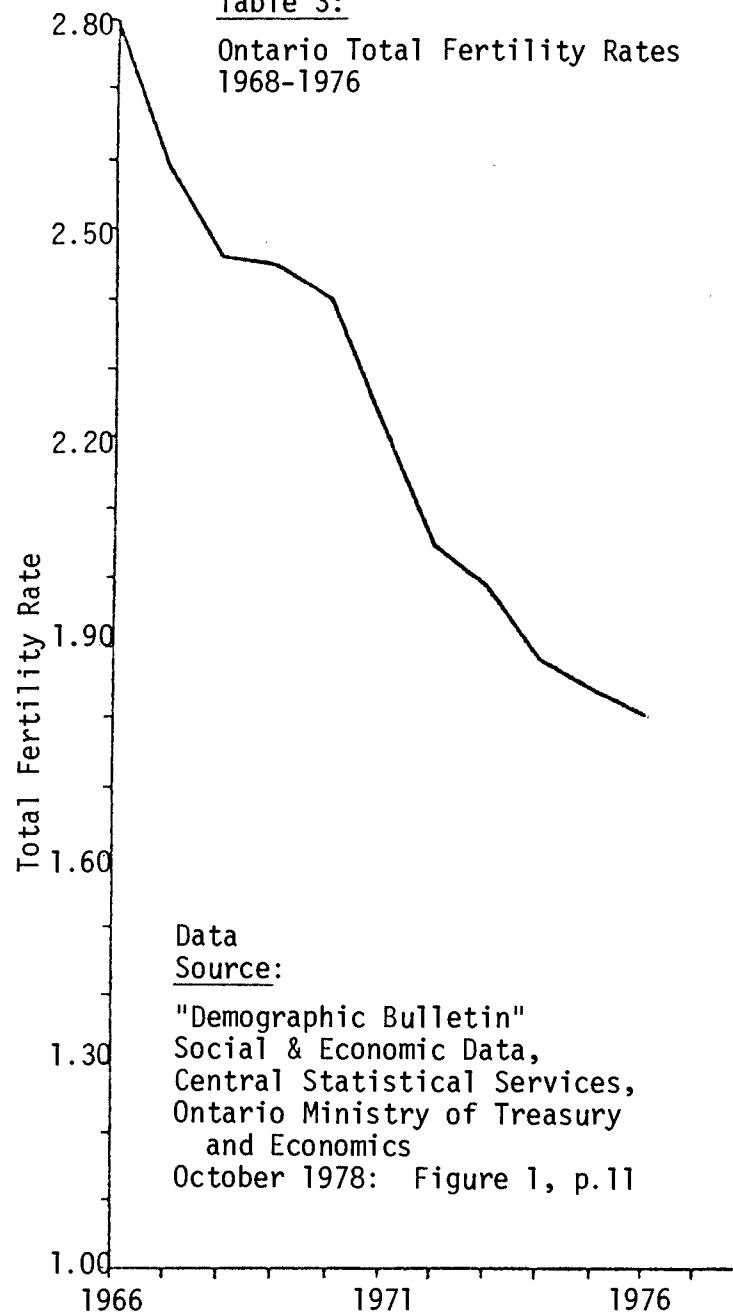


**Equipment for a gang** is what it takes to keep neighborhood playmates from fighting over the same swing. Children's play area at the home of the R. J. Giddings has an ideal assortment of big-muscle apparatus. There are things for climbing, sliding and swinging. With plenty of outdoor fun children are easier to live with indoors.



Source: "HOUSE BEAUTIFUL" (Special issue: "Children in the Home"), Hearst Corporation, New York City, September 1955

Table 3:  
Ontario Total Fertility Rates  
1968-1976



One fundamental form of change has been the rapid decline in child-bearing. This change goes to the very heart of what the post-war suburb was in large measure all about. Table 3 identifies the rapid decline of fertility rates in Ontario from 1966 - when it stood at 2.8 - to 1976, where the rate had dipped to around 1.8. There is real uncertainty of how low it will eventually go. What are the social and physical adaptations required when child-rearing is no longer a primary form of activity for growing numbers of adults. These and other changes in social conditions are some of the planning questions which have to be addressed.