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Theorizing suburban public space in Kendall

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THEORIZING SUBURBAN PUBLIC SPACE IN KENDALL

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

by

Fabio J. Bendaña

2001

To: Dean William G. Mcminn
School of Architecture

This thesis, written by Fabio J. Bendaña, and entitled Theorizing Suburban Public Space in Kendall, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Nicolas Quintana

Alfredo Andia

Marilys Nepomechie, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 13, 2001

The thesis of Fabio J. Bendaña is approved.

Dean William G. Mcminn
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Interim Dean Samuel S. Shapiro
Division of Graduate Studies

Florida International University, 2001

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my darling wife Suzette. Some of your qualities are patience, endurance, an immense capability to love and a gift to foresee the future. Every morning life begins again with your noble spirit beside me and for that I am the luckiest guy in the world. I also dedicate this thesis to my children Neil and Fabiola. As I see you grow I feel the powerful hand of God over us. Your smiles are indeed honey to my heart and music to my soul. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to Neil and Claudette Watkins for their help and support and for being faithful parents.

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I wish to thank the members of my committee for their support and patience.

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I have found my coursework throughout the Curriculum and Instruction program to be stimulating and thoughtful, providing me with the tools with which to explore both past and present ideas and issues.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

THEORIZING SUBURBAN PUBLIC SPACE IN KENDALL

by

Fabio J. Bendaña

Florida International University, 2001

Miami, Florida

Professor Marilys Nepomechie, Major Professor

The purpose of this study was to determine whether public space in the suburbs has the same settings as that of a central city or if it has its own characteristics.

In order to approach this problem the area of Kendall was thoroughly studied by examining aerial maps, historic images and writings of local historians such as Donna Knowles Born. Heavy emphasis was placed on the transformation of the original one-mile grid characteristic of the city of Miami. As the area of Kendall was being developed, the grid was transformed into an irregular and organic method of laying out a street system that directly affected pedestrian life. It became evident, therefore, that Kendall is primarily geared toward automobile movement, thus affecting the setting of public space. This also restricted social events forcing them to concentrate in specific places like the malls.

These findings demonstrated that malls are centers of social interaction concentrating many social activities in one place. In other words, a mall serves as a common meeting place in the otherwise vast spread of the suburbs.

This thesis also explains how public spaces in a suburban context can affect the community by working as filtering agents between the immediate context of a particular site and the overall city. The project, a "Wellness Center and Park" for the Kendall area, was an exploration of these filtering agents and the transitions they engendered. The research upon which this project was based recognized the important role of the site's history as well as extrapolating as to its future potential.

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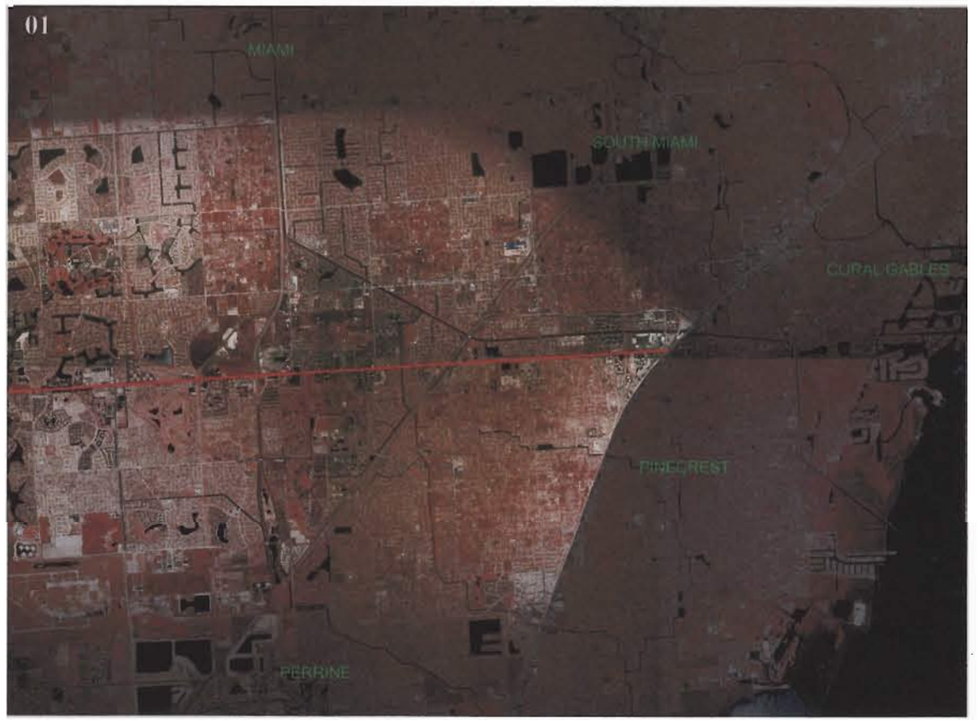
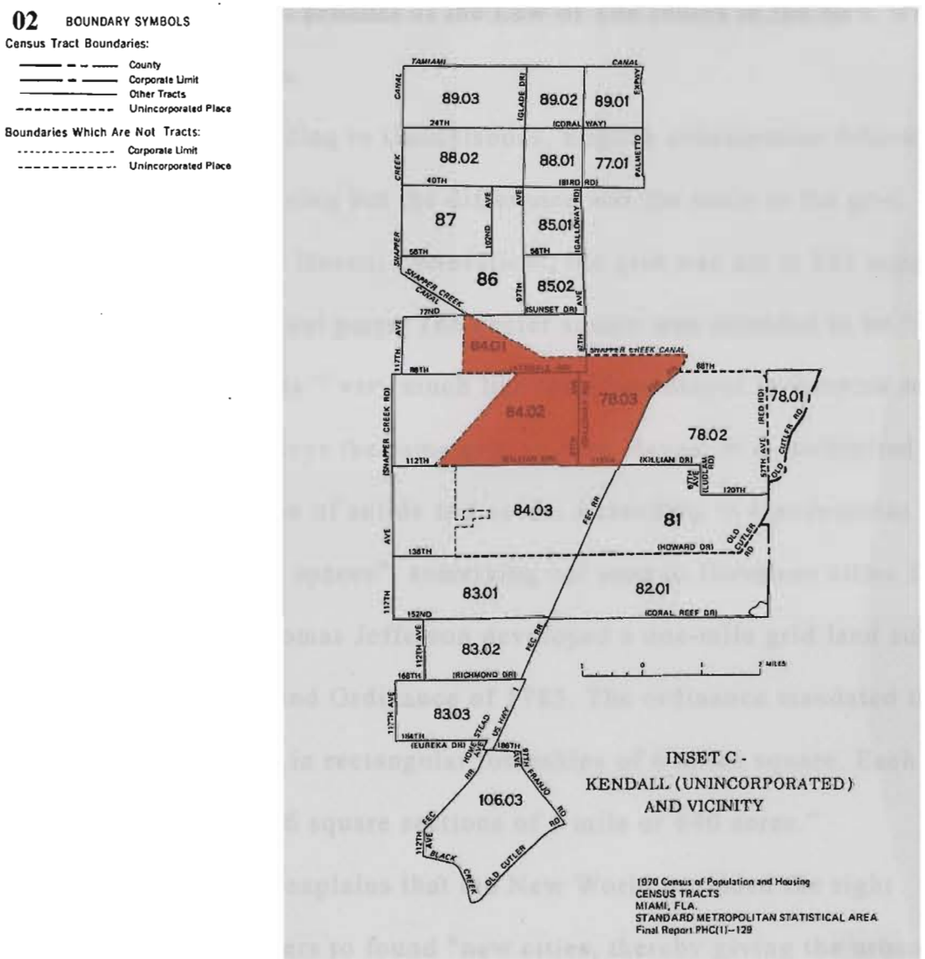
I. Introduction

The area of Kendall was first made available for development through the Swamp Act of 1850 when the U.S. government gave it to the State of Florida. It was not until 1960, however, that the area began to develop into a suburb of Miami. According to local historian Dr. Paul George, there were two main reasons for this occurrence: the opening of Dadeland Mall and the building of the Palmetto Expressway, which provided fast access to the area.[1] It is important to note that Kendall, while a fairly new outgrowth of the city of Miami, presents a number of characteristics typical of suburban formation. This study is intended to answer the question of what kind of public spaces exist in Kendall, whether new ones should be created, and how such spaces can be manipulated to fit the suburban context.

An article entitled 'Where is Kendall', published by the *Miami Herald* in 1994, states that the boundaries of the area are uncertain and that people in Kendall have individual definitions as to the North/South limits of the area. However, interestingly, people tend to agree on the East-West margins. Prevailing opinion holds that Kendall extends mainly towards the east where it is hemmed in by Dixie Highway or U.S. 1. and west until Krome Avenue. The area is divided into two main portions, East and West Kendall. The Florida Turnpike divides these two areas. The Miami-Dade Department of Planning and Zoning, confirmed the *Miami-Herald* newspaper article, revealing that Kendall has no clear definition because the boundaries are not clear.



Census records indicate, however, that certain census tracks or areas are officially assigned to Kendall. Thus, it is possible to obtain and calculate demographic information of the area.



This chapter intends to explain how the American city has changed from its inception, how public spaces have been created throughout its history, and how these spaces have affected the sociological and psychological requirements of the city inhabitants.

The ideas and theories of the Renaissance city came to the New World as a paradigm for the formation of the new cities. Ironically, it had been difficult for European cities to apply certain philosophies of urban planning as most existing cities in Europe were the product of medieval formation. The architect Mario Gandelsonas, author of the book *X-urbanism*, an in-depth study of the American city and its development, points out that like European cities during the Middle Ages new cities in America "grew out of the wilderness"[2] According to Gandelsonas, America had vast amount of virgin land where the New World Renaissance city could be built. The Spanish conquistadores implemented planning regulations via the Law of the Indies, first promulgated in 1573, almost one hundred years after the discovery of America in 1492. Nevertheless, the Spanish were the first to bring "the grid as the principle for the urban organization..."[3] to

North America. The first product of the Law of The Indies in the New World was Saint Augustine, Florida.

Meanwhile, according to Gandelsonas, English colonization followed a similar path in city planning but the difference was the scale in the grid. In the case of the town of New Haven, Connecticut, the grid was set at 825 square feet and divided into nine equal parts. The center square was intended to be "the geometric core of the city"[4] very much like the Plaza Mayor in Spanish settlements. Savannah, Georgia employs the same grid as New Haven. It is multiplied over and over, forming a condition of solids and voids. According to Gandelsonas this forms a "rich variety of public spaces", something not seen in European cities due to limitations of space. Thomas Jefferson developed a one-mile grid land survey system, known as the Land Ordinance of 1785. The ordinance mandated that the "land was to be laid out in rectangular townships of 6 miles square. Each township was to be divided into 36 square sections of 1 mile or 640 acres."

Gandelsonas also explains that the New World provided the right environment for colonizers to found "new cities, thereby giving the urban scenario described by Alberti- which could not be realized in the already-built cities of Europe..."[5] Consequently, the new American cities were efforts to reconstruct European cities. Christopher Tunnard, Professor of City Planning, at Yale University, writes, " Apart from the strong relationship between American ideals like that of religious liberty and the building of communities by various sects, there was no deliberate attempt to be different-the people who came to these shores built much as they had in their former homes."[6] Mario Gandelsonas challenges Tunnard by maintaining that the intention of the colonizers was to implement theories of urban planning that did not work in Europe. Their implementation in Europe required an immense amount of work and capital and/or political maneuvering.

Thomas Jefferson who had definite ideas about the city challenged the idea of the urban European city. Even prior to the Industrial Revolution, European cities had extensive problems. "The rate of congestion was frightening. Manchester, to take one dramatic case, had 12,000 inhabitants in 1760, 400,000 in 1850. While every hole in the old core was being filled in ... for the immigrant working class... The edge pushed out... without any public control."[7] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, deeply admired by Jefferson said; "that he left Paris in 1756 "never to live in a town again." The proper environment for a natural society, as he saw it, must be Nature itself. Men were "not meant to be crowded together in ant hills, but scattered over the earth to till it."[8]

A foundational concept for Jefferson and his understanding of the city was the belief that a rural way of life nurtures the freedom of man and is thus superior to city life because the latter corrupts society. This belief, in conjunction with his ideas on individualism, made him oppose urban living, "America requires a wise

and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement."[9]

The French writer Alexis de Tocqueville wrote extensively about American democracy and asserted that this country, like no other, was born democratic, free of the ideological pressures of European states. Thus the process of democracy for the United States was a natural condition[10] and was expressed by its people as being "capitalistic, achievement-oriented, egalitarian, individualistic, committed to secular progress."[11] These qualities can be found in Thomas Jefferson's philosophy of an agrarian state. "Democracy, he said, depends on the nurturing of certain virtues in its citizens. But those virtues, and the strength of character that we recognize as true independence in individuals, depend, Jefferson warned, on a certain kind of social order. They depend, he said, on a rural society. Hence he warned against "piling up people in cities. Cities are, he said, inherently and everywhere 'pestilential.' He exhorted Americans to let Europe have the cities...and, hence, the workshops, as well."[12] His experiences in Europe "drove Jefferson to radical dreaming of land redistribution"[13] in a country were millions of acres of land had not been exploited. This dream made sense in a country where, early in the nineteenth century, 90% of its citizens were farmers.

Jefferson proposed, "alternate blocks in a town be left in green space as a public health measure"[14] in order to prevent, as he perceived it, the evils of the industrial or centralized city, Jefferson made his view on the unpromising conditions of the European city of his time clear when he stated, "I view great cities as pestilence to the morals, the health, and the liberties of man,"[15] His utopian vision of an agrarian society were realized before he died as "Americans flocked to the territories and new states. Settling within the wonderful survey grids that Jefferson himself had proposed, newcomers established farms and towns (almost entirely) without slaves, and created communities with minimal social spectrums. They fed themselves and their stock, but also engaged in commerce, especially the driving of cattle and hogs, in order to buy their lands and tools, pay modest taxes, and provide for small cash necessities." [16]

In the late nineteenth century, with the progress of industrialization, Americans migrated to the city. This migration of farmers significantly altered not only the economy but also the social system of this country. Manufacturers were able to offer jobs that required minimum knowledge, effectively training people to operate machinery in a matter of hours. Urban centers grew rapidly.

Initially transportation influenced the tight growth of urban centers. The high cost of travel by horse or wagon required people to live in close proximity to their

places of employment. An alternative mode of transportation was the riverboat but it was soon replaced by railroad technology.[17] The steam railroad marked the beginning of the decentralization of the city. The American city became a series of fragmented villages or suburbs that with time would expand and become the city of today. This was due to the fact that railroad stations were miles apart. "American railroad suburbs were deployed like beads on a string"[18] and were as densely configured as the previous industrial urban centers due, once again, to transportation issues. Commuters had to walk to the station in order to take the train into the city. Moreover, these settlements were exclusively for affluent people, since railroad fares were deliberately expensive to exclude the working class. Railroad communities were developed for the sole purpose of substantial profit.[19]

Late in the nineteenth century the United States had grown into an industrialized country. Cities continued to expand rapidly as new methods of transportation, such as the electric trolley, furthered the process of decentralization. The trolley took the place of the steam railroad and was more affordable for the working class who traveled within the city. However, newly created residential districts were built outside the city center and were, again, exclusively for the well-to-do who could afford to buy new homes. As transportation systems became more sophisticated, the trolley was eventually replaced by the elevated railroads, which traveled at higher speeds since it had no physical obstacles. This faster system reduced commuting time and enabled people to live at greater distances from their places of employment. Consequently, the city expanded significantly over a greater amount of land. [20]

The final revolution in city transportation and city formation came in the early twentieth century with the invention of the car. The pioneer of the American automobile industry and inventor, Henry Ford, revolutionized the city. His views on decentralization are closely related to Jefferson's; he viewed industry as life devouring.[21] Ford's opinions are based on his childhood experience of farm life and his adult experience in a manufacturing plant. His promise was that he would

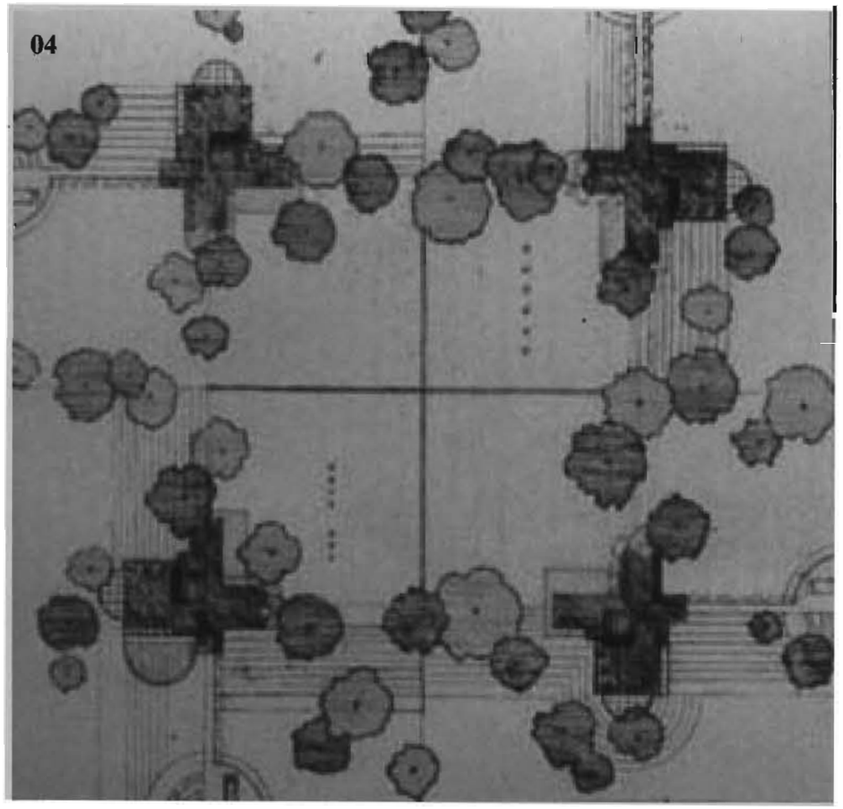
> "Build a motor car for the great multitude. It will be large enough for the family but small enough for the individual to run and take care of... But it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one-and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces."[22]

Ford encountered difficulty in attempting to reconcile the practical aspects of the organization of his manufacturing plants with the social outcomes they engendered. Ford's solution was to propose a series of many small village plants in the area of *Muscle Shoals* along the Tennessee River.

His economic views in relation to the city were as follows; "To get rid of the overhead of the big city, to try to find balance between industry and agriculture, and more widely to distribute the purchasing power of the wages we pay among the people who buy our products we began to decentralize."[23]

The Ford Motor Company, founded in 1899, was the largest automotive manufacturer in the world by 1915; in that year the company built 472,350 T model vehicles. Mass production of the automobile erased all physical boundaries. The city could grow as it pleased. The automobile not only stretched the city, it was also responsible for the serious disruption of the existing urban fabric as highways were constructed to connect cities' downtowns to the peripheral suburbs. By the "1930's the automobile had become the dominant form of transportation."[24]

Another figure of importance in determining the future of American cities was the architect Frank Lloyd Wright whose proposed 'Usonia' and later 'Broadacre City' have roots in Jeffersonian individualism[25] as well as Henry Ford's proposal for *Muscle Shoals*.[26] Wright saw the dense urban city as responsible for the annihilation of the welfare of the individual. This is similar to Henry Ford's belief in decentralization. Wright's opinion was that the machine, referring to the automobile, was a way to bring the city into the country and transform it into the spacious Broadacre City.

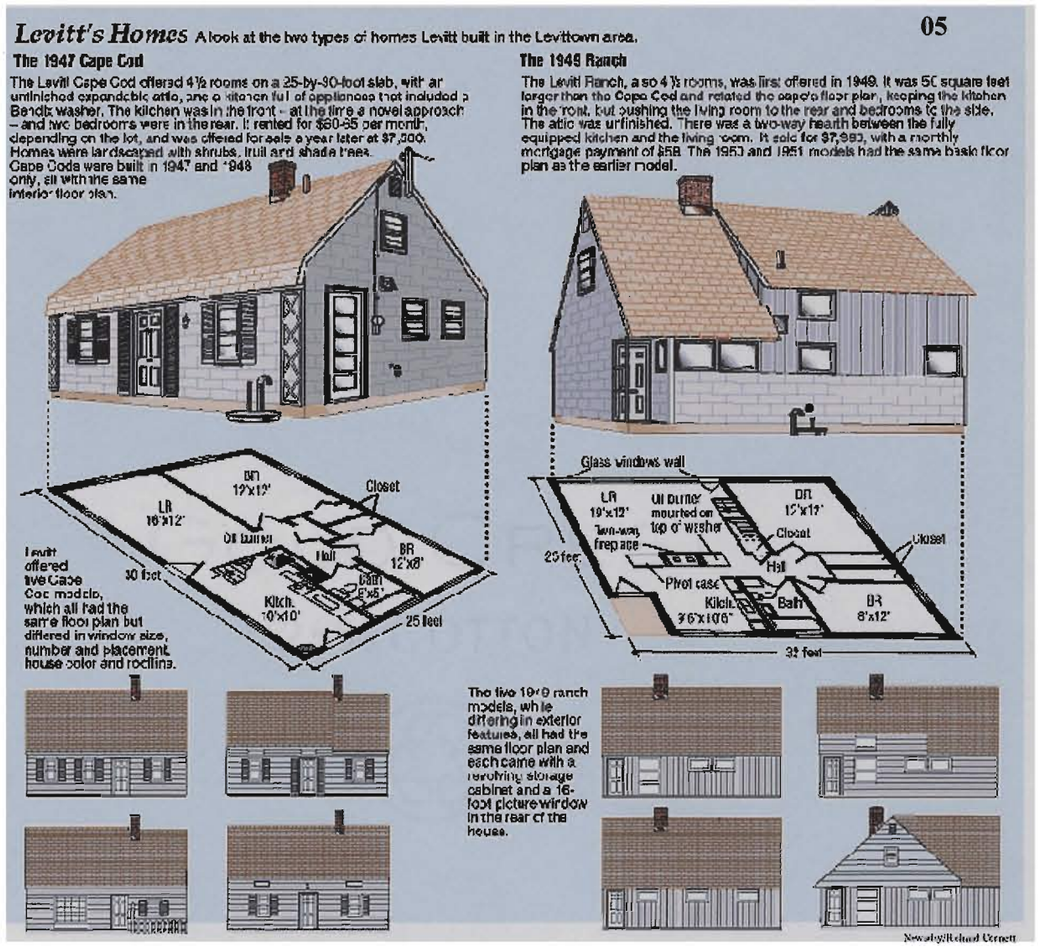


Wright's aim was to create a connection between the earth and human life. Of this he said: "It will soon become unnecessary to concentrate in masses for any purpose whatsoever. The individual unit, in more sympathetic grouping on the ground, will grow stronger in the hard earned freedom gained at first by the element of the city not the prostitute of the machine."[27] Here we see the embryonic notion of the modern suburbs reliant on the street system as a means of communication. Wright conceived Broadacre City as a utopian solution to the overcrowding of the centralized city. His model city was "everywhere and nowhere"[28]. In other words, it was decentralized. It was a place were individual families owned a parcel of land (one acre per family) that they farmed to provide for their own necessities. Since Broadacre was spatially generous it would have been easy for people to feel lost in this great city. Wright addressed the problem by creating "little farms, little homes for industry, little factories...a cozy setting..."[29] All these buildings were to be separated from each other, yet not at so great a distance that people would feel unsafe and lose any sense of community. In this way urban densities were prevented. Broadacre was strongly automobile oriented. In fact, houses were defined according to the number of cars they could hold. Lewis Mumford says in his book *The City in History* that Wright's house design was a genial and inventive influence in suburban development.

The post World War II era was marked by a new approach to suburban development. The Levitt brothers, developers from the area of New York, "capitalized on the housing crunch of the immediate postwar years, offering affordable housing to returning GIs and their families, in the form of small, detached, single-family houses equidistant from New York City and the burgeoning defense industrial plants on Long Island...Levitt was a master publicist, and he understood that to make his community a success, he needed to present it as a new form of ideal American life, one that combined the idealized middle-class life of the pre-war suburban communities, with the democratized life of younger, mainly urban-raised GIs and their families"[30] The only way to build affordable homes was through mass production which the Levitts mastered.

The Levitts built two types of houses. The Cape Cod style was built in 1947 and the Ranch house was introduced in 1949. The Cape Cod house was a rectangular slab 25 by 30 feet. The floor plan was very simple consisting of four and one half rooms, two bedrooms, a dining room, a kitchen and a bathroom. The Ranch house was 50 square feet larger and had the same number of rooms. The difference was in the layout of the rooms. In the Cape Cod house the entrance was located in the middle, the kitchen and living room were in the front pushing the bedrooms to the back. The entrance to the Ranch style was located on one corner.

The kitchen was laid parallel to the entrance, while the living room was sited directly in front of the entrance. The bedrooms were located to the side of the house.



The dimensions of these suburban communities were problematic in that they were too large to create a sense of neighborhood.

The Levitts responded by presenting "a new form of American community, an extended cluster of neighborhoods with 'village centers' to hold the elements

together."[31] Architects and Urban Planners criticized the repetitive nature of the community, the cramped spatial quality of the houses and the minimal landscaping that consisted primarily of shrubs not trees.

For those people who had to endure the post war housing shortage, living in cramped apartment buildings, the affordable prices offered by the Levitts (the first houses rented for $60-65 a month and a year later sold for $37,500) made this new concept more than appealing. It was the chance at a fresh start and, for some people, their opportunity to live the American Dream. This community came to be known as Levittown. The Levitts revolutionized the building industry with their mass production houses. But more importantly, Levittown, served as a model for future suburban building in the United States and the beginning of the modern suburbs in America.

Clearly, the traditional city in the United States or the 'walking city' as professor Kenneth T. Jackson calls it, has been changing since the 1800's, perhaps in an unconscious quest to discover what the American city should be. These changes have influenced the public spaces in new developments and suburbs. The automobile, which allowed the city to expand over a vast amount of land, has caused the most radical change. The result has been our dependence on the automobile as distances between places increased. Traditional public spaces have suffered because the pedestrian life of suburbs is nearly non-existent.

It is also important to note that the core city's central plaza, or square, has lost its vigor as people have moved out of the center of the city to the periphery or suburbs. According to August Heckscher, New York's Commissioner of Parks and

Administrator of Recreation and Cultural Affairs, town squares "provide a stage where people meet and mingle, where children play, and where the commonplace rituals of city life are carried out."[32] Today, town squares, with a few exceptions like Jackson Square in New Orleans, have a dual life. During the day, downtown workers who typically live in the suburbs frequent them. At night, they are empty. According to Jane Jacobs, author of numerous books on city planning, including the seminal *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* open spaces such as parks and plazas, must be able to host various kinds of uses throughout the day. Jacobs argues that places used only for a period of time during the day will tend to become "vacuums". The cause of the problem is not the square itself, but the close relationship that exists between building use and users and their respective schedules. Jane Jacobs, upon analyzing Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, points out that what makes this place a successful public open space is that

> "This mixture of uses of buildings directly produces for the park a mixture of users who enter and leave the park at different times. They use the park at different times from one another because their daily schedules differ. The park thus possesses an intricate sequence of uses and users." [33]

August Heckscher notes these spaces "play a role in renewal only when [they are] part of wider forces working together to improve housing, education, social services and employment opportunities. The square then may be the symbol, but not truly the fulcrum, of reform."[34]

Endnotes

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III. Historical Analysis of Kendall

In 1838, the Congress of the United States passed the Homestead Act. The purpose of this legislation was to encourage settlements in isolated and remote areas of the United States, such as southern Florida. The act enabled people to acquire title to unimproved acreage, not to exceed 160 acres, of government owned land once they had lived on said land for a period of five years. The first settlers in this part of Florida settled or "homesteaded" Biscayne Bay. The area now referred to as Kendall, or west of Biscayne Bay, was still part of the Everglades.

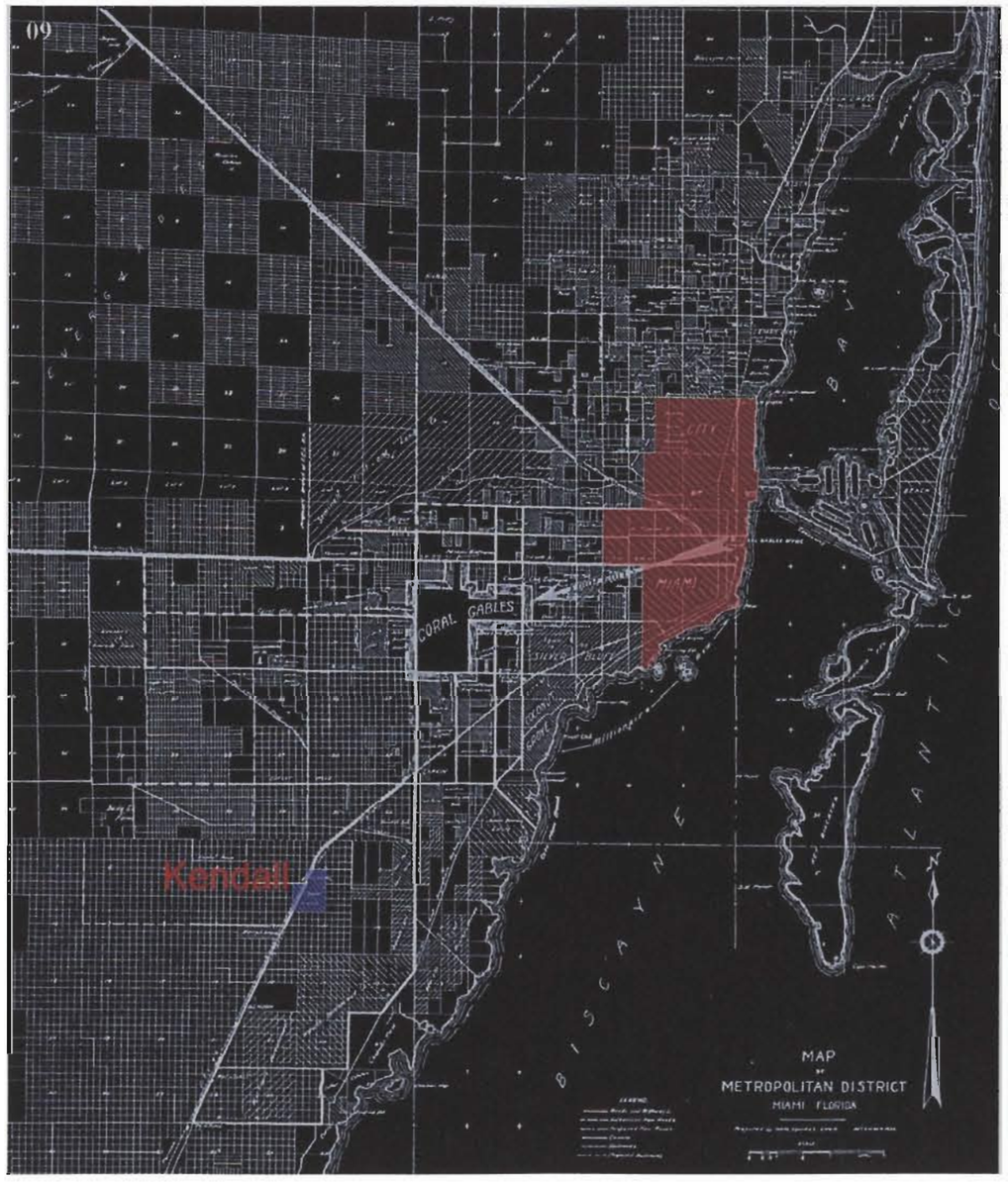
08

This area "was flooded part of the year, so by law no homesteads could be established there."[1] (**08**)

In 1850, twelve years after the Homestead Act, Congress passed the Swamp Act, which allowed all states to choose selected areas of swampland for development. "The State could then sell the land to individuals, use it as a donation to encourage the building of railroads and canals, or reserve it for state use."[2] Ten years before Miami was incorporated as a city in 1893, part of east Kendall, (four million acres), was sold to the Florida Land and Mortgage Company. The company eventually sold the land, in parcels, to individual owners.

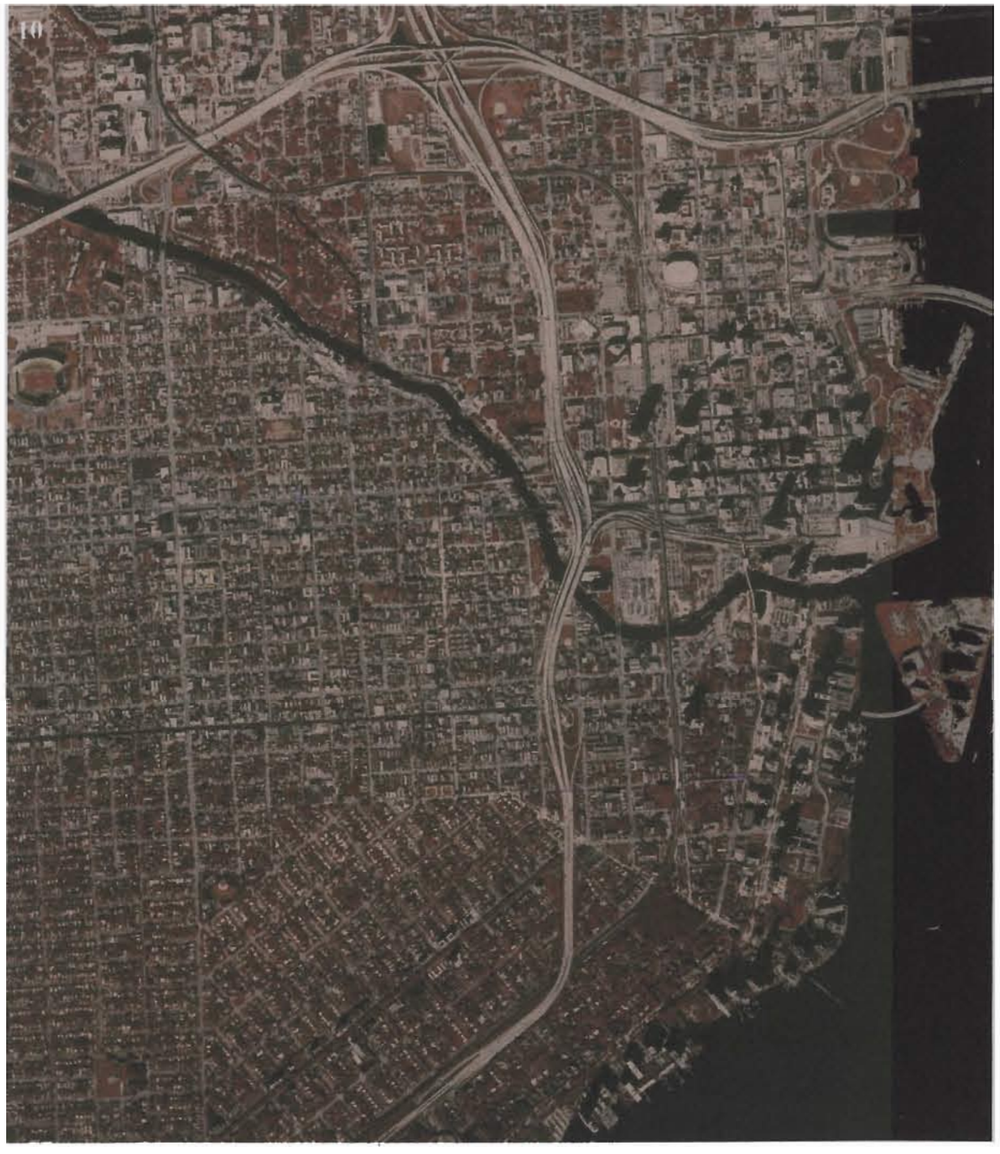
The territory of the city of Miami was subdivided into the one-mile grid land survey system as developed by Thomas Jefferson and known as The Land Ordinance of 1785. Since Miami and surrounding areas were divided with this system, the one-mile grid extended to the area of Kendall. (**09**)

The one mile-grid in the city of Miami "are realized as minor highways in Miami with these highways being 16 streets apart (north to south) and 10 avenues apart (east to west).[3] Therefore, it would typically comprise 126 rectangular blocks. As it will be evident later in this chapter, major differences exist between Miami and Kendall in the achievement of the division of the one-mile grid. At this point, it suffices to say Miami has largely developed the one-mile grid in an evenly rectilinear pattern. This is generally evident from maps of the city. (**10**)



During the 1900's, Henry John Bouhton Kendall was hired to manage the property owned by the Florida Land and Mortgage Company. From 1922 to 1926, when the boundaries were informal, Dan Killian was the County Commissioner of Kendall.[4] The town boundaries were roughly from 'North Kendall Drive', (today S.W. 88th Street or Kendall Drive), to the north and to the south, 'South Kendall Drive', (today S.W. 104 Street or Killian Drive). One of Killian's duties, as Commissioner, was to name the streets in the area. He named S.W. 88th Street "North Kendall Drive" and S.W. 104th Street "south Kendall Drive" in honor of the Englishman Henry J.B. Kendall.[5] Kendall had played a key role in the building of a charity hospital named The Kendall Country Home at S.W. 107th Avenue and 80th Street. (Figure) "In 1924, when the building was nearly complete and moving day was on the horizon, someone belatedly discovered that there was no electricity in Kendall!"[6] Killian, influential man that he was effectively persuaded the city to provide lights to the area.

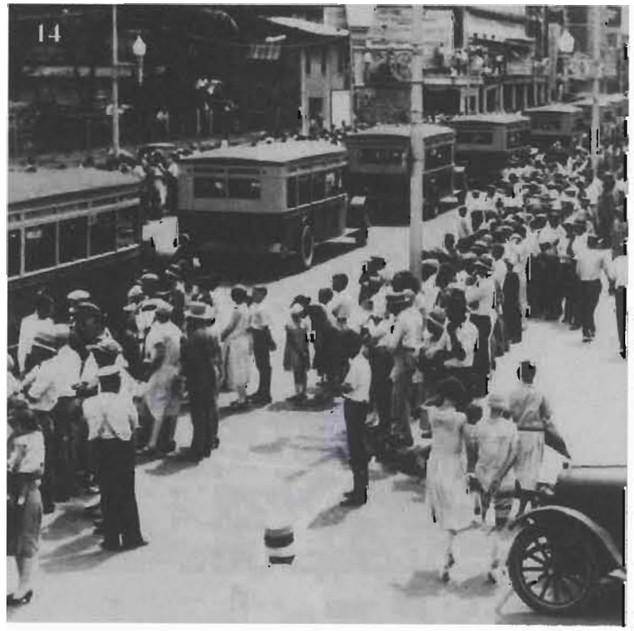
Early in the 1900's, Henry Flagler extended the Florida East Coast Railroad from Coconut Grove to Homestead. **(11)** A train station was opened in Kendall, which, as reported by the Miami Herald, was to have encouraged development of the area.[7] The train stopped at Hinson Street and Dixie Highway, known today as 98th Street. This site was also the location of the post office and Hinson's General



Store and marked where the original downtown Kendall once stood. To support his investment in the railway and to "demonstrate the fertility of South Dade's rich black soil,"[8] Flagler decided to open a "model grove to prove the worth of the land he had opened. The site he chose was in Kendall and consisted of 70 acres."[9] (**12**) The expansion of the railroad proved to be a success as it "made the rich agricultural acreage of South Dade accessible, and soon commercial groves of citrus fruit and avocados and fields of potatoes and tomatoes were flourishing in the area."[10] Kendall's first industry, a starch mill, owned by Albert Baxter Hurst, moved from Miami Shores to Kendall closer to where coontie root, the raw material

for making starch, was grown. The mill was situated on Dixie Highway, or the Federal Highway, as it was then called, and 104th Street. It remained in operation until the hurricane of 1926.

During this time, the city of Miami was flourishing. The local economy was strong and the construction industry was booming. (**13**,**14**) Kendall, however, grew at a slower pace. "In August 1925, the over-taxed Florida East Coast Railway declared an embargo on all freight in carload lots except fuel, livestock, and perishables."[11] As a result, the economy, specifically the building industry, was negatively affected. In 1926,catastrophe struck. A 128-mile per hour hurricane struck the city, claiming hundreds of lives and causing enormous financial losses. In 1929, all hope of economic resurrection was over as the stock market crashed.



The City of Miami and the rest of the United States entered into the Great Depression.

During this period, Kendall continued to grow, albeit at a very slow pace. After the Second World War, Miami's downtown experienced a decrease in the population growth rate, "reflecting the impact of suburanization in a manner typical of most American cities."[12] Returning G.I's in the post war years brought increased housing demands. The 1950's saw the beginning of the process of suburbanization in Kendall. Relatively affluent people started to move from the city into the area, pushing farmers further west and south to undeveloped land. (**15**)

According to Paul Kaplan, editor of the *Miami News*, early residents of Kendall knew and visited each other frequently. However, it was soon noticed new residents kept to themselves. "The newcomers were a different breed. They were city people living outside the city. They were solid people, all right, onward-and-upward families, people with clean-cut kids. But their jobs and their friends and their recreation were 10 miles to the north of Miami."[13] There is an enormous contrast between Dan Killian's original vision of Kendall as a true community and the ideas in the new inhabitants' minds. "For the suburbanites, Kendall was more of an investment in the future than a neighborhood around which their lives would revolve. It was where they had come to raise their children in long flat

houses with crew-cut lawns, a low crime rate, better-than-average schools and real estate that was bound to increase in value. And that's what they got."[14] The overriding issue was no less than the future of Kendall. If Kendall was dependant upon this type of resident, how would it be possible to build a sense of community in Kendall? Moreover, how is community identity accomplished under these circumstances? Joel Garreau, a Washington Post staff writer and author of the book *Edge City*, writes, " for a place to have an identity, people really must feel they are

stakeholders in It."[15] He further writes" They must see it as having an importance relative to their personal interest."[16] In other words they must be engaged in its development and be disposed to fight for it as being of their own.

Early in 1956 the Governor Thomas LeRoy Collins announced that the State of Florida "would built the Palmetto By-pass, linking the Sunshine State Parkway with U.S. 1. "[17] **(16)**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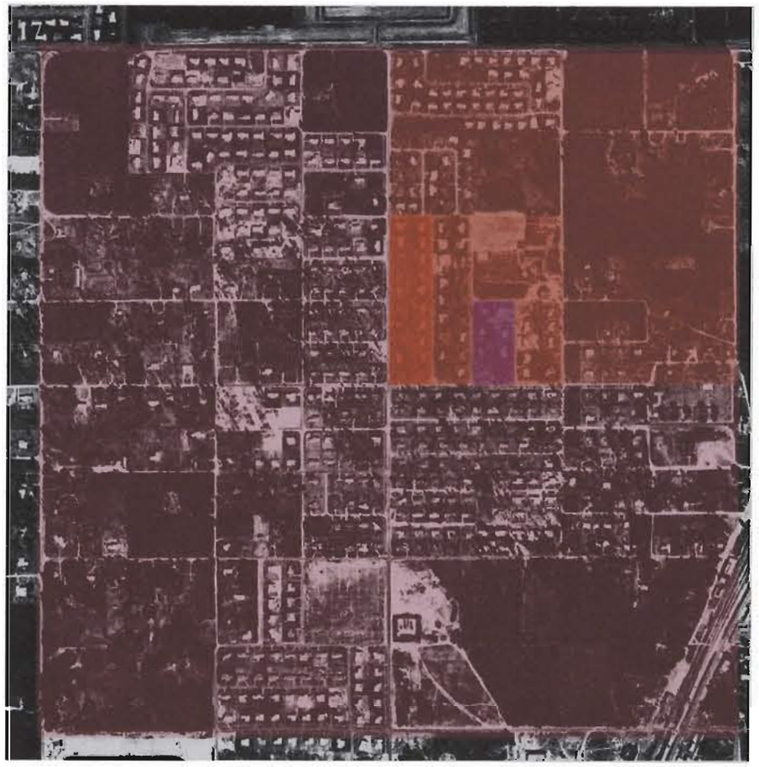
Residents of the area welcomed the idea as progress, a time saver and an end to traffic jams. Meanwhile, Arthur Vining Davis, a millionaire from Pittsburgh, who moved to Miami in 1949, announced that he was to "build a 70 acre, $15 million shopping center at the intersection of North Kendall Drive and South Dixie Highway..." the shopping center was to be called Dadeland Shopping City.

In the 1960's, Kendall developed at a fast pace. As per the Land Ordinance, the area was already divided into one-mile square sections that were accentuated, as in the City of Miami, by minor highways or main streets. For example the first subdivision in Kendall, (with an area of one square mile), was located south east of Dadeland Mall. It was sub-divided into four parts, each a half- mile square. In turn, these four squares were again subdivided into four more squares of one-quarter mile each. However, unlike similarly developed sections of the City of Miami, these squares did not follow an even pattern and consequently, the blocks did not align with one another. Some blocks were as long as 1/4 of a mile and some were 1/8 of a mile. The irregular alignment of the blocks, (which created dead-end streets) as well as their length, created an awkward situation for pedestrian activity. This pattern encouraged vehicular traffic. **(17)**

According to Miami historian, Dr. Paul George, Kendall was considered to be the fastest developing region of Dade County in the 1960's. "By the mid-1960's,

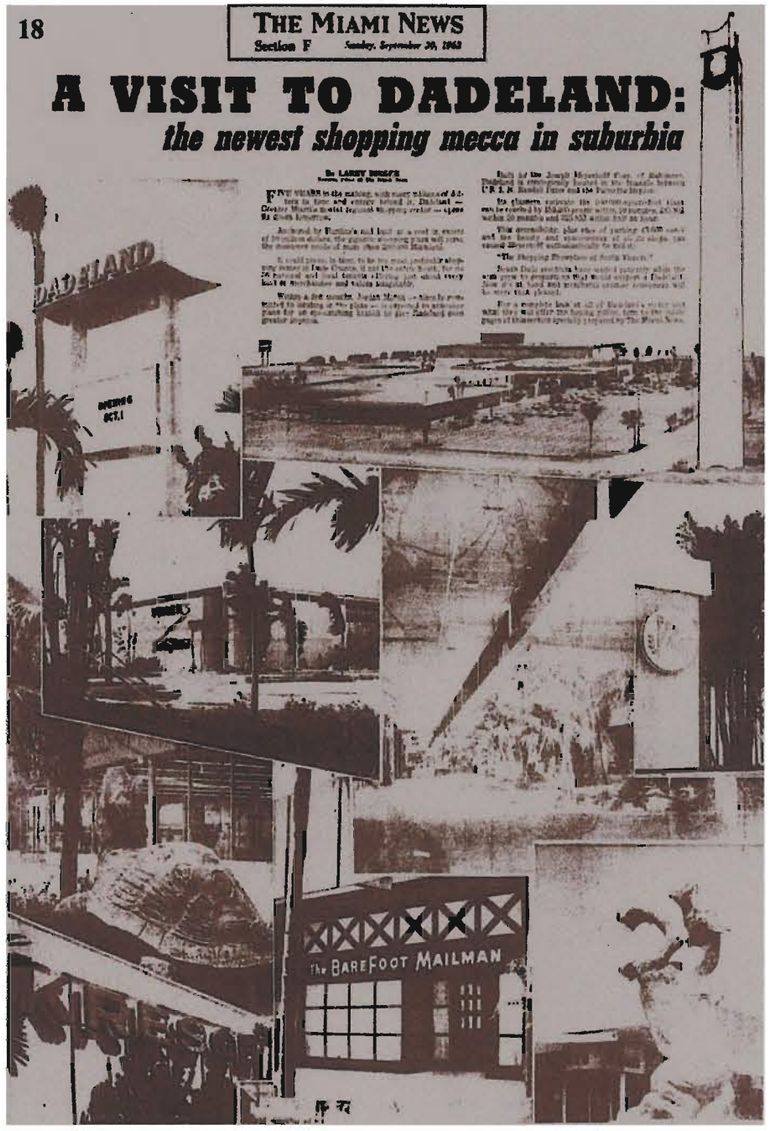


developers had built several affordable subdivisions in Kendall, and homeowners were flocking in droves to the area. They were attracted not only to the reasonable prices for housing, but also to a growing road system that made the region more accessible to downtown Miami and other areas of heavy employment."[18] According to the census track of 1960, the population in Kendall was 21,656, of whom 98% were of Anglo-Saxon descent. People who lived in Kendall during this period were affluent enough to afford single-family houses. From aerial photographs it is evident no apartment buildings existed during this period. Socially, these numbers also show that Kendall was relatively homogenous, as its residents were almost exclusively similar in ethnicity, race, and income and family structure.

During the early 60's, "governmental planners, institutional leaders and entrepreneurs, aware of its location and developmental potential, weighed the needs of burgeoning Dade County, and planted the seeds for its explosive development."[19] The population that continued to move to Kendall and even farther west did so to escape the busy pace of metropolitan life. Certainly, the opening of the Palmetto Expressway in 1961 and Dadeland Shopping Center in 1962, on the corner of North Kendall Drive and Dixie Highway (U.S. 1) made Kendall a magnet for businessmen. **(18)**

Architect and writer, Aldo Rossi, in his book 'The Architecture of the City', makes the point that cities begin with certain elements, which he calls 'fixed activities.' He defines fixed activities to

> "include stores, public and commercial buildings, universities, hospitals and schools... Whatever reduction of urban reality we make, we always arrive at the collective aspect; it seems to constitute the beginning and end point of the city."[20]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THE MIAMI NEWS
Section F Sunday, September 30, 1962

A VISIT TO DADELAND:
the newest shopping mecca in suburbia

By LARRY BIRGER
Staff Writer of The Miami News

FIVE YEARS in the making, with many millions of dollars in time and money behind it, Dadeland — Greater Miami's newest big-league shopping center — opens its doors tomorrow.

Anchored by Burdine's and host to a cast of 200 other stores, the gigantic shopping plaza will serve the downtown needs of many thousands of Dade residents.

It could prove to be the most profitable shopping center in Dade County, if not the nation. It has 26 restaurants and food concessions alone, just about every kind of merchandise and service imaginable.

Within a few months, Dadeland Motor Inn is expected to be completed on the plaza — as a prelude to extensive plans for an ever-growing Kendall and greater Dadeland.

Built by the Joseph Magnin Co., of San Francisco, Dadeland is conveniently located in the Triangle between U.S. 1, Kendall Drive and the Palmetto Expressway.

Its planners estimate the center's expected 10,000 customers a day will be drawn from within 10 minutes, 20 minutes and 30 minutes of the center.

This accessibility, plus plan of parking 4,000 cars and the beauty and convenience of an air-conditioned shopping mall, should make it automatically a success.

"The Shopping Downtown of South Florida."

Dade County officials have called it a priority within the area prior to preparation of what would comprise a Dadeland Zone of 40 land use classifications to control development in the area.

For a complete look at all of Dadeland's stores and what they will offer the shopping public, turn to the inside pages of this section specially prepared by The Miami News.

DADELAND

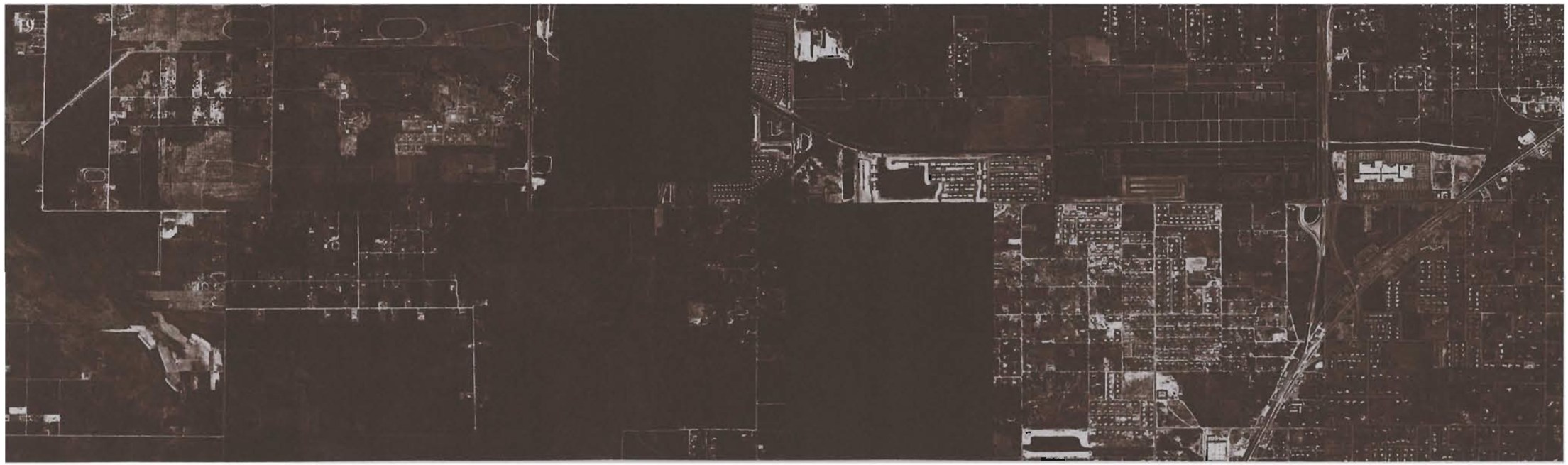
The BAREFOOT MAILMAN

A full-page spread in *The Miami News* announced the opening of Dadeland Shopping Center. Skeptics nicknamed it "Deadland" because of its out-of-the-way location. Today it is one of the nation's five busiest shopping malls.

Rossi's idea of fixed activities is useful when analyzing the area of Kendall. Aerial maps of the area show a concentration of housing developments being built between North and South Kendall Drive and west of U.S. 1. (**19**) It is interesting to note that this area, the first to be developed in Kendall, surrounded old downtown Kendall, a place which contained public buildings such as the Kendall train station, Hinson's store and the post office. This pattern is typical of the establishment of the first suburbs in America, which were developed along railroad stations.

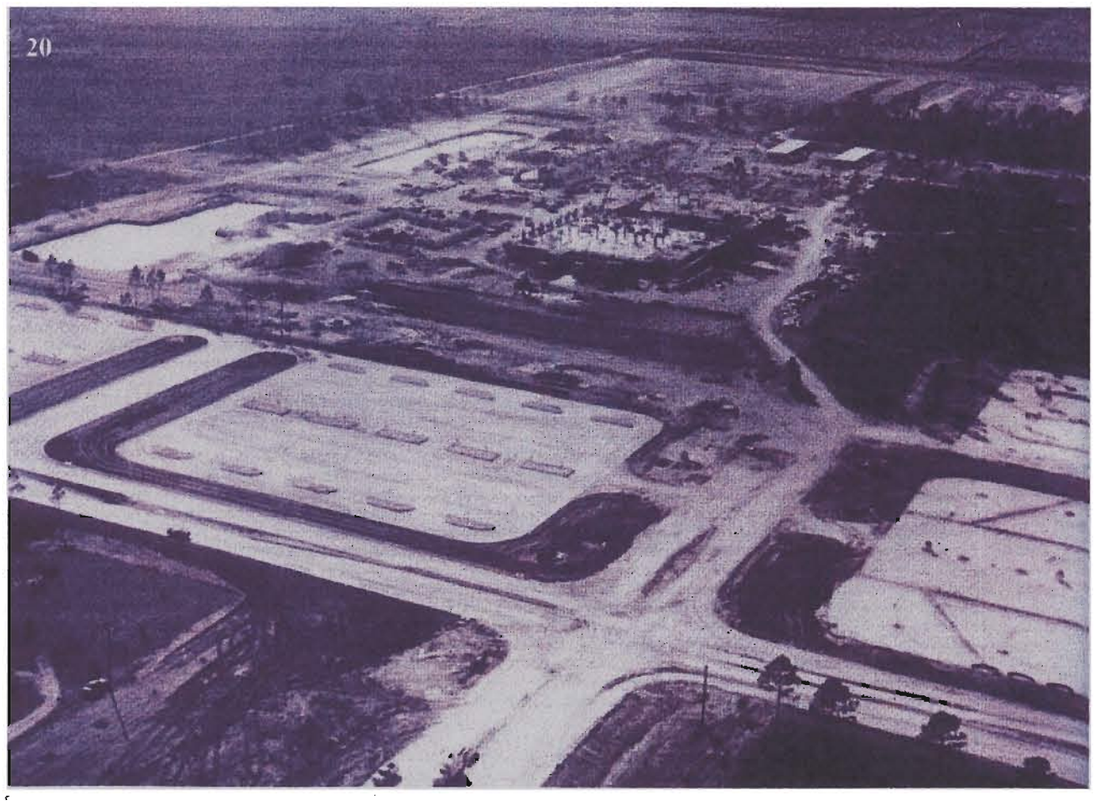
Lewis Mumford points out in his book *The City in History* that the suburbs have some distinctive characteristics that have been present since their formation. One characteristic is that the suburbs secluded themselves from the city. They did not develop as a continuation of the city. In Kendall, aerial photographs show that this seclusion occurred not only from the city, but also among neighbors and entire subdivisions: the distance between individual dwellings and between communities was far greater in the suburbs that that of the traditional urban core. The resulting spatial configuration reflected this difference.

Unlike the original City of Miami, Kendall did not follow an even growth pattern as it developed beyond the original one-mile grid. Kendall left residual spaces as it grew. Houses and entire subdivisions seemed to spring from the ground like wild flowers, without consistent order. This in turn had a social effect, as subdivisions did not relate to one another. The fact that communities and



neighborhoods were physically separated made it impossible for Kendalites to acquire a sense of the community as a whole. From its inception, Kendall was an automobile oriented place. By the end of the 1960's, the Dadeland Shopping Center was made into an enclosed and air-conditioned mall. At this time, North Kendall Drive was made into a four-lane road between Dixie Highway and the Palmetto Expressway. Beyond this point, Kendall Drive remained a two-lane road.

According to *Miami News* editor, Paul Kaplan, " Dadeland took that wide, rambling mass of flat land east of the Everglades, west of Old Cutler Road, north of Howard Drive (SW 136th St.) and south of Miami, and gave it both a physical and psychological starting point."[21] Today, The Department of Planning and Zoning of the city of Miami, considers Dadeland to be a regional urban center, which they defined to be an area of mix-uses, office, retail and dwelling. Other communities were being established along North Kendall Drive parallel to the development of the Dadeland area. Thus, North Kendall Drive also performed an important role in the history and development of Kendall. Arial maps show that, even though in the early 1960's business had not reached west of Kendall Drive, some people had bought land right across from Baptist Hospital and further west near the railroad tracks; today this is the Don Shula Expressway. Beyond this point, Kendall remained farmland interspersed with residential housing. Late in the 1960's, along Killian Drive, Miami Dade Junior College (later renamed Miami Dade Community College) was inaugurated. (**20**).



In the 1970's, according to census track records, the population of Kendall was still predominantly white. There were now 37,710 people in the area, of whom 92% were white; the rest comprised a mixture of races, mainly Hispanics. The statistics shown here reflect a decrease in the white population due to the immigration of Hispanics. At this time the Hispanic population was composed mainly of Cubans who had arrived during the 1960's. They had prospered and had moved away from places like Little Havana, which had been their original "home" in Miami. At this time apartment complexes started to be built and are visible from aerial photographs. (**22**) Kendall Drive was converted into a four-lane road past the Florida Turnpike, which was built in the early 1970's. Also, new businesses started to move into the area, mainly between 107th Avenue and Kendall Drive. These businesses were established to cater to the needs of the numerous housing sub-divisions that sprang up on either side of Kendall Drive.

Late in the 1970's, there was a proposal from the planners of Metropolitan Miami to build a rapid transit public transportation system that would link Dadeland and downtown Miami. Miami Commissioners also recommended a rezoning strategy for the Dadeland area to increase a "low-density residential neighborhood, zoned for no more than six homes per acre, to a high-density urban center for as many as 50."[22] The residents immediately protested, afraid that the area would become depressed and property values would decrease significantly. Residents countered with "a plan that recommends no zoning change for the next 20 years southeast of the Dadeland South Metrorail site."[23] Another point of controversy was that rapid growth meant schools were not able to adequately accommodate newcomers.

Meanwhile, the ever increasing demand for housing meant developers were desperate to invest in the area for its obvious high profit potential. The suburb of Kendall continued to grow as farmland gave way to developers who followed the mass standardization housing model set by the Levitts two decade before. Developers typically had two or three styles of houses, which they repeated several times in each particular development. This strategy kept costs to a minimum and made Kendall's new developments financially accessible to a wider range of potential buyers. An example of this was a joined housing development of the Arvada Corporation and a group using City National Bank as trustee. It was a 640 acre housing development, located in West Kendall between Bird Road and Sunset Drive and between 147th S.W. Avenue and 157th S.W. Avenue. (**23**) This area was converted into a 5000 single- family house and townhouse development with a projected population of 15,000 persons. (Figure) Locals were uneasy about the situation saying, "People who went out there when there were no schools don't want others coming out and crowding their schools."[24] Ironically, a decade ago these same people had been judged as being only interested in their personal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investment and not in making a community. Paul Kaplan, Miami News editor, quotes Steve Siegfired, president of the Kendall Federation of Homeowner Associations, when he confirmed the comment above by saying, "we are not opposed to everything. We're just opposed to certain things that threaten our environment."[25] Thus, a sense of community had awakened in Kendall.

Simultaneously, Kendall was slowly becoming a physically and spatially fragmented place. As profit was the driving force, housing developments sprang up anywhere and everywhere. Developers received permission to build and left empty, unplanned, residual spaces between developments. This approach only re-enforced Kendall's already established model of a highly car-oriented society.

The population increased to 45,821 habitants, of whom 67% people were white, 26% Hispanics and the rest of mixed origin. During this decade the city of Miami experienced a heavy influx of immigrants. This also affected the Kendall area. The most significant group of immigrants were the 124,776 Cuban exiles who came during the Mariel Boatlift in 1980. Also, starting in 1979, a wave of Nicaraguan refugees arrived Miami seeking political asylum. The white population decreased as they slowly moved out of the Kendall area. A second wave of affluent immigrants, who had arrived earlier and were already settled, migrated to Kendall and other areas. There is also evidence in aerial photograph of Kendall that

apartment buildings were increasing in number to provide less expensive housing for lower income groups. (**23**)

Late in 1983, despite the many complaints of the resident community during the previous decade, Dadeland North Metrorail Station was inaugurated. This was also accompanied by the construction of medium rise office buildings built directly across from Dadeland Mall. Kendall was filling the empty spaces with more houses, apartments buildings and streets. More businesses were concentrated along Kendall Drive between 107th Avenue and the Don Shula Expressway. These businesses, following the pattern of the Dadeland Mall, continued to create parking lots at the edge of the street, recessing the building to the back of the lot, as was typical of the American suburbs. The parking lot became an extension of the street. This rationale opposed the traditional city in which buildings typically created a street front, with a pedestrian sidewalk, while a single row of automobiles were parked parallel to the street front. In Kendall, the storefront was absorbed by an immense parking lot. This space qualified as public space, since it was accessible to everyone, but hardly qualified as a space where people interacted. The parking lot was, and still is, an efficient and uncomfortable mechanical space, which serves as a means for businesses to move customers as quickly as possible.

Throughout the 1980's, banks, schools and mini-strip store shopping centers opened to keep pace with the growing population of the area. In 1984, the Metro Commission approved the Mediterranean style Kendall Town and Country Center. The shopping center was to be built on a 92-acre lot on the corner of 117th Avenue and Kendall Drive. According to the *Miami Herald*, construction was to be in three phases, " the first stage include[d] a 70-store convenience center, restaurants, a nine-acre lake and a 1,950-seat movie theater with eight screens. Phase two will include an eight-story, 312-room hotel, an arcade with specialty shops and two six–story office buildings. Phase three will include additional office buildings..."[26] Local residents had protested against the project in fear that it would bring congestion to the area. Two years after the mall had opened it was sold in foreclosure. Today, according to the Department of Planning and Zoning, the area surrounding the Town and Country Mall is categorized as a regional urban center, a place of mixed activities -- among them office space and shopping-- catering to the needs of the nearby residential areas.

The 1990 census established the population of Kendall to be 182,981 people, of whom 49% were Hispanics, 47% White and 4% black. This drastic shift in population is due to the fact Kendall has ceased to be limited to the well to do. In the late 1980's and through the 1990's, it has become a more diverse place due to a

wider range of available housing stock, typically apartment and townhouse complexes. Developers, to maximize profits, have built more apartment complexes and townhouses than single-family houses in the last decades due to high real


WEST KENDALL
EAST KENDALL
EAST KENDALL

estate prices. They have increased the number of people who live in a certain area, primarily by building multi-story apartment buildings. This in turn, makes housing more affordable for people of lesser income.

During the 1990's land became increasingly more expensive as the demand for it increased. This forced developers to move west towards the area known as The Hammocks where land was less expensive. In turn, Kendall was ever more dynamic as the population increased. Even though Kendall was growing to be economically self-supporting with the availability of office space and increased employment opportunity, downtown Miami was and remains an important source of employment for Kendall residents.

The area of Dadeland kept growing. Behind the mall and next to Dadeland North Metrorail Station, a Dadeland Station commercial project began construction. This project would house big retail stores to complement the specialty shops of Dadeland Mall. Metrorail was extended south of Dadeland along with a new complex, Datran Center, which included office space, a multi-story parking garage and a high-rise Marriot hotel. There was also a proposal in 1998 from the Miami-Dade Transit Agency (MDTA) to extend Metrorail west of Dadeland. There was a study made by the agency about possible routes for the future path of the Metro. One possibility was for it to run along the old train tracks, parallel to the Don Shula Expressway, which would connect the Miami International Airport and Kendall. The other possibility was to run it along Kendall Drive.

In a newsletter published by the agency, Mr. Mario G. Garcia, Project Manager of the MDTA, was clear in justifying the agency's intentions to propose the extension of Metrorail. He said, "It is critical that we address the needs and wishes of the community and the environment while making a positive impact on the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in and around the area,"[27] In his statement he also encouraged the general population to participate in the decision making stage of such a project. The director of the MDTA, Danny Alvares, also affirmed "Historically, Kendall has experienced rapid growth in land area, population, the local economy and in its need for reliable transportation alternatives."[28] Today, according to the Comprehensive Development Master Plan for the City of Miami, as established by its Department of Planning and Zoning, the future route of Metrorail will tentatively be from Dadeland running westward along Kendall Drive to about 136th Avenue.

Public buildings started to establish their presence in Kendall along 117th Avenue and between Kendall Drive and 72nd Street. Businesses flourished as a new wave of shopping areas, supermarkets, low-rise office buildings and retail stores moved to the area during the 1990's to meet the needs of the ever-growing population. These businesses, as noted before, were concentrated along Kendall

Drive and other strategic areas where the population was higher, especially near apartment areas such as 107th Avenue and 72nd Street and 117th Avenue and 72nd Street.

However, the Comprehensive Development Master Plan map printed in 1998 shows overwhelmingly that most of the area in Kendall is still low in density. (**24**) According to that plan, such low-density areas average 2.5 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Surprisingly, the Dadeland area, even though it has become more densely populated since the 1960's, is one of the least densely populated areas in Kendall. It only averages 1 to 2.5 dwelling units per acre and is considered to be in the category of estate density. The more dense areas of Kendall, although not by definition highly dense, are linearly scattered along Kendall Drive in the area between 107th and 147th Streets. This area is a mixture of low-medium density with about 5 to 13 dwelling units per acre and medium density with about 13 to 25 dwelling units per acre. As it can be seen from the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, the highest densities are concentrated in areas of heavy commercial activity, mainly in four points: around Dadeland Mall, 107th Avenue, Town and Country Shopping Center and 137th Avenue. These commercial centers serve as commercial cores and employment providers, surrounded by low-income apartment buildings. Interestingly, in contrast to the rest of Kendall it is in these areas where pedestrian activity is seen.

After studying the development of the Kendall area, it is evident that the area, relatively speaking, has exploded over the last forty years. It is interesting to question whether Kendall will ever become a traditional city like Miami. I have not defined the word suburbs up to this point, as it was my intention to inform the reader about Kendall. It is often tempting to define suburbs as generic, as a condition of almost every city. However, I have observed, as a result of living in suburbs for a great part of my life, that even though suburbs share many physical characteristics, each suburb is uniquely composed of different people. This is what makes a place. A place like Kendall is unique in its multi-cultural setting. It is no longer 98% white as in the 1960's. By 1990, it evolved to be 49% Latin American,

47 % white and 4 % black. I am sure that currently these numbers have further changed accentuating Kendall's ethnic diversity.

Kendall has become, in the larger context of greater Miami, an almost independent and self-sufficient place. It is made up of individual, often walled or gated, communities or neighborhoods physically separated from each other. For this reason, it is an automobile-oriented place with an extensive road system that has been stretched to the maximum; it is often necessary to widen streets to accommodate the number of automobiles circulating trough them. Kendall Drive, the principal street in Kendall, is an artery that bisects the area in half, north and south, communicating Kendall with the remainder of the city in a linear fashion. It does not have traditional public spaces such as plazas and squares. The original historical artifacts of Kendall such as the train station, the general store and the post office located in the original "downtown", were demolished with the construction of the Palmetto Expressway.

In terms of its architecture, Kendall is characterized by subdivisions with repetitive housing units. The average community has three, four and occasionally five identical models of houses arrayed along virtually identical streets. The houses might differ in color, treatment of the façade and landscaping but the overall composition is faithful to the basic models.

There is one thing Kendall lacks: unity. Kendall is composed of a series of puzzle-like communities that make up the whole. The problem is that these communities are not physically continuous. The irony here is that a puzzle only makes sense once all the pieces are in place. If one piece is missing, some of the meaning is lost. In Kendall, however, if one of these neighborhoods were to be blown to bits, the area would not lose anything. Thus, in Kendall, none of these communities is essential to the whole. Jane Jacobs writes, "We must first drop any ideals of neighborhoods as self-contained or introverted units."[29] Thus, if Kendall is only seen as a collection of individual neighborhoods, there cannot be a true sense of the community as a whole. Jacobs continues by arguing we do not realize that the entire city is a neighborhood. This is not to say that cities, or Kendall for that matter, should not have individual communities, but their integration is necessary to fully experience the richness a city can offer. Kendall is a multi-cultural district and I doubt we take advantage of it. Jacobs adds, "The neighborhood of the entire city is where people specially interested in the theater or in music or in other arts find one another and get together, no matter where they live."[30] When this happens Jacobs asserts people take action to solve the problems of the city, thereby creating a community.

Endnotes

[1] Donna Knowles Born, The Road to Somewhere: A History of Baptist Hospital, (Miami: Arva Parks and Company, 1990), 17.
[2] Jean Taylor, The villages of South Dade, (Miami: Byron Kennedy and Co, 1985), 39.
[3] Sandra Suarez, "The One-Mile Square: A Collection of Spaces" (MS. Thesis… Florida International University, 2000), 17.
[4] Donna Knowles Born, The Road to Somewhere: A History of Baptist Hospital, (Miami: Arva Parks and Company, 1990), 25.
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[7] Ana Acle Chasko, "Where is Kendall," The Miami Herald, 25 September 1994, sec. Neighbors, 20.
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[11] Born, 32.
[12] Eduardo Rodriguez, "Changes in Population Characteristics and Job Opportunities: The Case of The City of Miami," (Master thesis., Florida International University, 1987), 12,13.
[13] Paul Kaplan, Miami's Neighborhoods, ed. Pat Morrissey (Miami: The Miami News, A Cox News Paper, 1982), 65.
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[15] Joel Garreau, Edge City, (New York: Anchor Books, A division of Random House, Inc., 1992), 269.
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[22] Michael Capuzzo, "Kendall Rallies Against High-Rise Future," The Miami Herald, 25 September 1979, sec. 2B.
[23] Michael Capuzzo, sec. 2B.
[24] Michael Capuzzo, "Ruling Due on Kendall Properties," The Miami Herald, 17 September 1979.
[25] Paul Kaplan, Miami's Neighborhoods, ed. Pat Morrissey (Miami: The Miami News, A Cox News Paper, 1982), 65.
[26] Yolanda Ulrich, "Kendall Shopping Mall Approved," The Miami Herald, 11 March 1984, pg. 10.
[27] Study Provides Access to Tomorrow," The Kendall-Airport Corridor MIS Newsletter, October 1998, 1.
[28] Study Provides Access to Tomorrow: Director 's Message, 1.
[29] Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 114.
[30] Jane Jacobs, 118.

IV. Assembling the City-suburb

In architecture and urban design there are, currently, two strong philosophies debating the future of the city-suburbs. On one side, the New Urbanists offer two answers. The first is to eliminate the suburbs. The New Urbanist defines the American suburb as being a place with,

> "cookie-cutter homes, wide, treeless, sidewalk-free roadways, mindless cul-de-sacs, a streetscape of garage doors... Meanwhile, more cars will worsen your congested commute. The future residents will come in search of their American dream, and in so doing will compromise yours."[1]

For the New Urbanist all suburbs have these identical characteristics, regardless of location and, thus, do not have an individual identity. The New Urbanists assert the best possible solution to the problem of suburban growth is to force density in such areas. Their other answer is to start from a clean slate, establishing villages such as Seaside and Celebration in Florida.

In contrast to the New Urbanist's views, the well-known architect and Harvard urbanist Rem Koolhaas, in his book *Generic City,* wants to convince us the city has ceased to exist and that urbanism is no more. For Koolhaas, the future city cannot rely on history for its existence and that identity must be stripped away. [2] For the purpose of clarity I will consider the most important issues of each philosophy individually.

It is essential to begin the discussion by defining identity, as both Rem Koolhaas and the New Urbanists recognize the subject of identity as being primordial to their philosophy. According to Webster's Dictionary, identity means a set of characteristics or circumstances that make someone or something recognized as what it is, without the possibility of being confused by something else.

This leads to the first question; what does Rem Koolhaas mean by the term *Generic City*? For Koolhaas the idea of the generic comes from the observation that there is a "collective, free-floating anxiety...about an absence of history, center and place while, at the same time, a large part of mankind seems happily capable of inhabiting the "newness" that has been built from scratch, on the tabula rasa."[3] Since the *Generic City* begins with the tabula rasa, it must be similar to Kendall, which has a very short history. Thus, as Koolhaas says it is our belief that, "Identity derives from physical substance, from the historical, from context from the real, [thus] we cannot imagine that anything contemporary-made by us-contributes to it." Therefore, recent history "becomes too small to be inhabited and shared by us", he says. But, is this true? Are we not making history as we breathe? Where does history begin? How far should we look back in order to consider something validly historical? Humanist philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, writes that

> "The only radical difference between human history and 'natural' history is that the former can never begin again... the chimpanzee and the orangutan are distinguished from a man not by what is known strictly speaking as intelligence, but because they have far less memory. Every morning the poor beast has to face almost total oblivion of what they lived through the day before, and their intellect has to work with a minimal fount of experience. Similarly, the tiger of today is identical with that of six thousand years ago, each one having to begin his life as a tiger from the beginning as if none had existed before him. Breaking the continuity with the past is a lowering of man and a plagiarism of the orangutan."

History is a continuous cycle without end. History must happen today to become the yesterday of historical tomorrow. Can we ever escape history? Once up on a time, I suppose, we started from the tabula rasa. Why should we start again? Can we? Have we not learned the lesson?

Mr. Koolhaas proposes that the Generic City has done away with identity that, "identity is like a mouse trap" Koolhaas writes, "the stronger the identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal, contradiction". On the other hand, do we not desire identity? Identity is like history; it is inescapable. It is an unconscious mechanism by which we make cities be what we want them to be. Nature has demonstrated to us that even identical twins, upon close examination, can be physically distinguished from one another, not to mention through other individual qualities such as personality and taste. Likewise with cities, we can argue that although suburbs can be perceived as identical in that they share similar characteristics, can there really be two exact Kendalls?

Koolhaas also makes the argument that "identity centralizes; [because] It insists upon an essence." Thus, "the area characterized by the center becomes larger and larger, hopelessly diluting both the strength and the authority of the core..." I can see, perhaps, that such a statement does make sense in relation to downtown Miami and Kendall. For, as Kendall has developed, the necessity to go to downtown Miami, even for employment has been significantly reduced. Downtown Miami, as has been the case with most downtowns in the United States, has suffered great financial losses. They no longer have the automatic ability to attract people and must fight hard to retain the population they have. But there exists yet another reality. Koolhaas' idea that 'identity centralizes' does not hold in a suburb like Kendall. While the idea of a 'center' exists in Kendall, the center is actually linear and is called Kendall Drive. This center delivers equal attention throughout the area as it extends east/west, right in the middle of its rectangular form. It is a magnet because commerce is there.

Koolhaas writes "the generic city breaks with the destructive cycle of dependence: it is nothing but a reflection of present need..." In other words the

Generic City does not have any connection to its past and that it is of no consequence to its future. The Generic City expands according to what it needs. In this regard, I am in some agreement with Koolhaas as I have observed that a great part of Kendall has grown at will. However, I have also noticed that dependence is not necessarily always destructive. In Kendall all streets are numbered for practical purposes. However, some streets have not lost their 'name'. Kendall Drive is rarely referred to as 88th Street, nor is Killian called 104th Street. This begs the question: why? Will these names disappear in this century or perhaps in the next? Certainly, they have prevailed over their intended generic replacements for almost 100 years. I believe we are dependent on things that attach us to a place and provide it with an identity. I might not be sure of Kendall's limits, in fact many Kendalites do not know its municipal limits, but it is certain that when you cross or when you drive along Kendall Drive, you know you are in Kendall. And for those people who know Kendall's history, it will at least remind them of Kendall's first pioneers. Thus, even if as Koolhaas claims, this has no consequence whatsoever, it at least, reminds us of the past and gives us a sense that we are in that place called Kendall.

Koolhaas further claims that the generic city is "an endless repetition of the same simple structural module: it is possible to reconstruct it from its smallest entity, a desktop computer, maybe even a diskette." This minimalism, as expressed in the Generic City, affects the city in its function as a public realm as devoid of pedestrian life. It is in the Generic City, as a product of minimal human interaction, that the automobile, wide roads and highways have replaced people on the street. This has been the case in Kendall since its conception. However, Koolhaas is contradictory when he argues,

> "What is new about this locomotive public realm is that it can not be measured in dimension. The same (Let's say ten-mile) stretch yields a vast number of utterly different experiences: it can last five minutes or forty: it can be shared with almost nobody, or with the entire population."

How can the street generate a multitude of experiences if the Generic City is repetitious throughout? To what population does Koolhaas refer when streets are described as empty?

For the sake of argument, let's suppose Mr. Koolhaas is right. The experiential relationship between driving and the city is movement in time. This idea can be translated as the act of driving and seeing. From this point of view there exists no experience whatsoever since we must concentrate on the steering wheel and the act of driving to avoid accidents. Any attempt to capture the experiences of the city, for example, watching different people walking down the street, are missed due to the speed at which we travel. Thus, in fact, what we experience is not the city but the monotonous rear end of the automobile in front of

us.[4] Even when we stop at a red light, other automobiles surround us. If we take a second to observe other drivers, we will discover everyone is absorbed in his/her own world, only experiencing themselves and nothing more.

I believe that by no means is Rem Koolhaas' *Generic City* the answer to the future of the city. If I tell the average Kendalite that Kendall is generic, I wonder what his/her reaction will be? Whether the city is understood as individual communities or as a whole, it is far more complex than generic because it involves human behavior that includes the choices we make for the city to happen.

Forty years ago Miamians started to moved to Kendall. First, they moved to escape the undesirable and congested urban setting of the traditional central city. Miamians wanted to build their reality form scratch and seclude themselves into gated or walled communities, which ultimately became a symbol of belonging rather than a measure of safety. As Joel Garreau writes in his book, *Edge City*,

> "What a wonderful irony! In order to improve your individual choices, the best bet is to have a home with no individuality. It is in this context that forbidding walls around subdivisions make a kind of sense... it may not be important if those walls don't defer crime. They are social boundaries."[5] It was "an attempt to recover what was missing in the city, the suburban exodus could be amply justified, for it was concerned with primary human needs. But there was another side: the temptation to retreat from unpleasant realities, to shirk public duties, and to find the whole meaning of life in the most elemental social group, the family, or even in the still more isolated and self-centered individual."[6]

Another response to the suburban exodus is provided by the New Urbanists. The example chosen is the proposed New Urbanist project for downtown Kendall in the area of Dadeland organized by the Kendall Council of Chamber South and executed by Dover, Kohl & Partners and Duany, Plater-Zyberk, local urban planning firms. The information about the project is taken from the brochure 'Downtown Kendall Master Plan' published by the Kendall Council of Chamber South. Also, in order to fully explore the New Urbanist arguments it is critical to include the book *Suburban Nation* by Andres Duany et al. and to specifically examine the chapter entitled *How to Make a Town*.

The Chamber South mission statement reads as follows; "The vision of the Downtown Kendall project is to create a thriving center of activity in Kendall with a consistent and an appealing urban identity". I wonder if they have truly considered Kendall's identity. On closer examination of the mission statement, it becomes apparent the words 'appealing urban identity' do not belong together. The word *appealing* is more appropriate to marketing strategy and has nothing to do with urban identity.

Prof. Harold Proshansky and his colleagues at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, say that the identity of a place is "a potpourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings."[7] Thus, Kendall's identity results from remembering its history and its subsequent interpretation as applied to its physical environment. Identity comes from history. Therefore, it follows that since every place has a unique history, it must also have an identity unique to that place. Hence, Kendall's identity has its origins in its history, or in its development over time. We must look at Kendall's history, why it happened, how it happened and what it says about the people who created it. Why look for identity when it is right in your face? If Kendall's identity is dictated by its own history, why should we transform it into something it is not?

As I look at the Downtown Kendall Master Plan brochure, I cannot help but notice that its images, which must refer to the desired "appealing urban identity", are quite extraordinary. The imagery in the brochures transports me to any place other than Kendall. The images conjure up an idyllic Renaissance town that was sketched yet never realized. This is not to imply this aesthetic may be inappropriate in its own context, but I must question its validity in relation to Kendall. (**25-27**)

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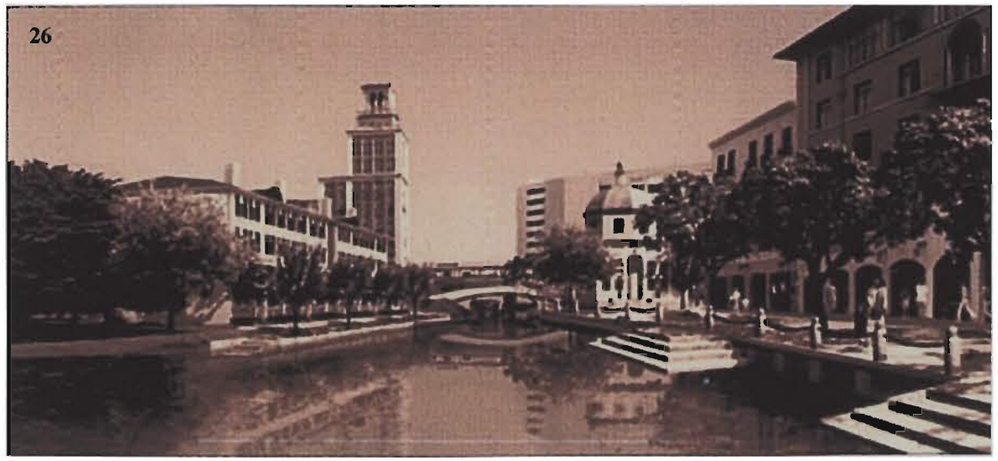


The Kendall Council of Chamber South insists upon the idea that Kendall "has many of the ingredients of the modern metropolis, but lacks a proud, recognizable center."[8] This approach is the product of the fallacy that without a center, we have no identity, as proposed by Koolhaas in the *Generic City*. The Kendall Council of Chamber South seems to imply that without a center we are not recognizable, when in fact we are. They have failed to realize that there is a center in Kendall, but this center is not a point; it is not a concentration of densities such as that of a traditional downtown. This leads to the question: Why has Kendall concentrated upon an axis rather than a central point?

It is clearly seen in the history of the American city that the creation of center cities has failed over and over again. Joel Garreau says "Americans never much liked living at the densities typical of those old downtowns...They were not swell places... We lived that way only for as long as it was necessary to get jobs. As soon as the Industrial Age produced the machine that would allow us to live a respectable distance from the poisonous environment we associated with our toil- we jumped at the opportunity.[9]

Part of the failure of the central city in the United States is the influence of leaders like Thomas Jefferson, who in his writings, declared his preference for an agrarian society. I quote him once again; "I view great cities pestilence to the morals, the health, and the liberties of man,"[10] Another instance of American discontentment with the city is found in the writings of Henry Ford, who stated, "We shall solve the city problems by leaving the city,"[11] More recently, the idea of Broadacre City by Frank Lloyd Wright, has had an impact in the shaping of our cities. These diverse influences have led people to accept the spaced city with fervor.

I would like to make one last point about the main purposes of the master plan scheme for Downtown Kendall. Heavy emphasis was placed on discouraging driving and on the revival of pedestrian life. For the New Urbanists the street is dead, as dead as it is for Rem Koolhaas. But while Koolhaas is indifferent towards pedestrians, the New Urbanist seeks ways to bring them back to the street. The New Urbanist argues that streets are too wide. This fact, in addition to the speed at which vehicles travel, makes the pedestrian feel unsafe on the street. Their approach to the problem is to bring buildings right next to the sidewalks, reducing the width of the street so that traffic slows down in this narrower space. In addition, New Urbanists argue

> "The problem with street design standards is not that engineers have forgotten how to make streets feel safe but that they don't even try. Streets that once served vehicles and people through them now are designed for the sole purpose of moving vehicles through them as quickly as possible. They have become, in effect, traffic sewers. No surprise, then, that they fail to sustain pedestrian life."[12]

It is clear that the American urban inheritance is, in fact, anti-urban. If at one time the city grew in a compact way, it was out of necessity, mainly for reasons of economy and transportation. The age of the machine superseded those early conditions and we have moved on at a full speed to develop our own style. Kendall has increased its population by about 160,000 people in forty years. One of the difficulties of these numbers it that it becomes impossible for people, despite the insistence of a few Kendalites, to form a traditional community. The real concern is that Americans are always on the move. One day a person might live in Kendall, but a year from now, he/she might move to New York and five years later to Los Angeles.

Everett Carll, director of the Institute for Social Inquiry and Executive Director of the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut, writes, "American society is engulfed in rapid change, and a single generation spans great variety in life styles and aspirations."[13] Similarly, Alex Krieger writes, the American city is "occasionally admired for its size and boundlessness, for its energy, for its material wealth, for its lack of exhibited sentimentality towards a past, for its ability to accommodate change, for its incompleteness and modernity."[14] This constant moving has caused Kendall, and perhaps this is true of a number of cities in the United States, to expand without boundaries. How can we build true communities? Not only for those who already live there, but also to integrate people moving in. Can the Generic City do this? Or can this be accomplished by becoming more traditional?

Endnotes

[1] Andres Duany et al, Suburban Nation, (New York: North Point Press, 1st ed, 2000), X.

[2] Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau, S, M, L, XL: The Generic City, (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995).

[3] The generic City: Singapore of Bladerunner, New Perspective Quarterly, Summer 1996, v 13, n3, p4(6).
[4] Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., Ideology in America, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), 109.
[5] Joel Garreau, Edge City, (New York: Anchor Books, A division of Random House, Inc., 1992), 281.

[6] Lewis Mumford, The City in History: The Suburban Way of Life, (New York: A Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc, 1989), 494.
[7] Harold Proshansky et al, Place Identity, Physical World Socialization of Self. Journal of Environmental Psychology. 3, I: 60 in Stephen Carr et al., Public Space, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 343.
[8] The Kendall Council of Chamber South, "Downtown Kendall Master Plan," (5-12 June 1998) <> (8 November 2000)
[9] Joel Garreau, Edge City, (New York: Anchor Books, A division of Random House, Inc., 1992), 106.
[10] Thomas Jefferson, "query XIX: The Present State of Manufactures, Commerce, Interior and Exterior Trade," in Notes on the State of Virginia, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1054). Quoted in Alex Krieger, "The American City: Ideal and Mythic Aspects of a Reinvented Urbanism," Assemblage, no. 3 (1987): 40.

[11] Henry Ford, "Ford Ideals: Being a Selection from' Mr. Ford's Page' in The Dearborn Independent," (Dearborn, Michigan, 1922), p. 425, quoted in Alex Krieger, "The American City: Ideal and Mythic Aspects of a Reinvented Urbanism," Assemblage, no. 3 (1987): 40.

[12] Andres Duany et al, Suburban Nation, (New York: North Point Press, 1st ed, 2000), 64.
[13] Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., Ideology in America, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), 71.
[14] Alex Krieger, "The American City: Ideal and Mythic Aspects of a Reinvented Urbanism," Assemblage, no. 3 (1987): 38-59.

V. Public Spaces in Kendall

Previous chapters established conditions in the Kendall area, its history and various factors that might affect or have affected its development. This was necessary to effectively create a well-grounded opinion and to attempt to answer the questions at stake as precisely as possible. This chapter examines the main subject of this research and asks the question: "What kind of public spaces exist in Kendall?"

This question has a simple answer; Kendall lacks traditional public spaces on a large scale. The next step is to determine possible explanations for this absence.

One of the primary causes for the lack of public spaces in Kendall is that contemporary suburban life is strongly linked to shopping malls. J. John Palen, Urban Sociologist and professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, thinks that shopping malls are the symbol of suburban America. He goes on to say that "You may love the malls or believe they are sterile and without soul, but it is impossible to discuss suburbia today without noting the importance of the malls not only for retail purchasing but also for social life."[1]

As a counter argument, New Urbanists argue that malls "are places strictly for shopping."[2] In East Kendall there are two main shopping centers: Dadeland Mall and Town and Country Shopping Center. Contrary to New Urbanist thought, these are places where indefinite numbers of social experiences occur.

These malls serve as gathering places for teenagers, who frequent the mall on a regular basis, to hang around with their peers, for young families to stroll with their children on weekends, for tourists to shop and experience the place, and for stages for Christmas and other holiday productions. Carrousels and mechanical toys provide some entertainment for children. There are numerous restaurants where a quiet dinner can be enjoyed, discothèques for dancing and perhaps a drink or two and many other sundry activities. Thus, shopping malls are a fulcrum of social interaction due to their attractiveness as a place to meet.

In the suburban setting, malls are attractive because they offer many activities concentrated in one place. They provide a common meeting place in an otherwise vast, spread out suburb. Some critics have long assailed suburban malls as having no context with their surroundings, as they are generally isolated in the midst of extensive parking lots. Another source of criticism is the fact that these malls are not within walking distance of residential areas. Regardless of these criticisms, suburban malls continue to thrive as the general population continues to frequent them.

A second possibility for the lack of public space in Kendall is the street system. Many experts in city planning agree that, traditionally, the street has been the primary public space of a city, providing the city with public interaction. This is not true in Kendall since almost every activity requires the use of the automobile. Walking in Kendall is the last option considered. To illustrate this point I propose the following example; friends live in different subdivisions, less than 1/8 of a mile apart. In order to visit one another, they each encounter a series of difficulties that makes the trip undesirable by foot. The curved streets make the trip longer than it should be. Also contributing to the length of the trip are the restricted entry points required by walled subdivisions. The end result is a journey one mile in length, eight (8) times its actual length. (**28**)

Another argument is related to the configuration of individual communities or developments. Typically, they are gated, offering pool houses and small parks or green areas where members of each community only interact with each other. To make my point more clearly, I would like to offer as an example one particular neighborhood. It is very small and simple to explain but as a community it is typical of the area."La Fontana" a Spanish style townhouse community, located on the corner of 104th Street and 117th Avenue, is a gated community, with only one street that ends in a cul-de-sac. The townhouses are laid out parallel to the single street, which curves at arbitrary intervals. Parking spaces are located between the street and the townhouses. In the middle of the compound a small park, twenty-five feet in circumference, faces the pool house where social events such as birthdays are celebrated. (**29**)

Community meetings are held there among many other functions. At the end of this community there is a second small park, twenty feet wide and forty-five feet in length. Experts in the urban field suggest that; "A community-built garden or playground can greatly enrich the social life of a neighborhood."[3] These small parks or gathering spaces work very well. Here neighbors take their children to play in the afternoon while they talk and share their lives.

Upon interviewing Nicholas Chung, a member of this community, I realized the importance of such spaces. He thought it was important to have these small parks right in front of one's living quarters because it made one feel safe. The fact that the community is gated allowed him to let his children wander about without the worry of injury or crime and without the fear of traffic. He thought he was privileged to have this kind of space available just a few yards away from his home and thought that this community would be lifeless without the presence of these spaces. "It is certain," he exclaimed, "that this community would be a lonesome place with out this park." He followed by saying," Our children would be forced to play inside, watch television, or play computer games." Mr. Chung pointed out the fact that he was happy to be on a first-name basis with all of the nearby residents. He thought that it was the small park that served as link between members of the community. "This space unites us," he declared.

It is possible to think the existence of these gated communities results in a type of social segregation, much as exists at a country club where only members are admitted. Admittedly, the gated community is not open, as such, to the general population of Kendall. However, this must be considered in conjunction with the effect of sprawl in the suburbs. Consequently, it makes sense to have gathering places in individual neighborhoods like La Fontana, where residents can step out of their homes and without much effort enjoy the benefits of localized public space.

Finally, the dearth of public spaces in Kendall can simply be due to the lifestyles of residents. Residents may simply prefer to spend their time on in-house entertainment, such as the television set and the computer. Other activities include what Lewis Mumford called "the do-it-yourself activities" of the suburbs. These activities include the basic requirements and responsibilities of being a homeowner, such as mowing the lawn and gardening. Television is used as a classic excuse to stay home. But there are reasons why we prefer to stay home.

I propose a fictitious example, but one which is not entirely fabricated. Anyone who lives in the area of Kendall at about 147th Avenue and Kendall Drive

and works, let's say, downtown, might be able to relate to this situation. You leave work at five o'clock in the afternoon. Whichever route you take, whether it be Dixie Highway or State Road 836, it will take you at least an hour to get home, barring any accidents along the way. You arrive home at six o'clock, after struggling with traffic. By this time, the last thing you want to do is get into your car again and go to a plaza to pass the time. By contrast, the community park seems more appealing as a place to relax. But, the television set becomes even more engaging due to the fact that you have an equal or even better visual experience, and best of all, you are in the heart of your home.

In all honesty, as I consider the possible causes for the nonexistence of public space in Kendall, I am tempted to think that people in Kendall do not want public spaces. However, my objective is not to make people desire what they do not want. Thus, contrary to the proposed master plan for Downtown Kendall, which tries to introduce high densities for the area and traditional plazas to create a sense of place, I am trying to find a way in which public place can enhance the experience of the suburbs. In exploring possible answers to the second stage of my question, whether new public spaces should be created and how such spaces can be manipulated to fit the suburban context, it is necessary to move towards a more pragmatic public space that does not interfere with the suburban setting but instead encourages and creates different kinds of experiences that may help Kendall be a more wholesome place to live.

The city or the suburb must complete its meaning with time. It must involve "all of its history, geography, structure and connection with the general life of the city."[4]This does not mean that suburbs like Kendall do not have any significance at the present time, but I feel that the suburban experience can be nourished and enriched. Therefore, proposing public spaces in East Kendall can only be of benefit to the area.

Endnotes

[1] J. John Palen, The Suburbs, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1995), 188.
[2] Andres Duany et al, Suburban Nation, (New York: North Point Press, 1st ed, 2000), 6.
[3] Stephen Carr et al., Public Space, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 343.
[4] Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City: Primary Elements, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 22.

VI. Creating New Public Spaces in Kendall

The following chapter is a summation of ideas presented in previous chapters and will focus on possible factors that might generate public spaces in Kendall. This chapter will also explore which specific qualities should be included and those that should be avoided to achieve successful public space in Kendall.

Imbedded in the American urban tradition is the desire to decentralize cities. This philosophical position can be traced to the beginning of this country and its European colonization. When we translate this history and philosophy to public spaces in East Kendall, the result is that traditional public spaces are, or have been, rendered obsolete due to the physical environment of the suburbs.

Recent movements to revive traditional settings in a suburban context are a reaction to the spatial configuration of the suburbs. But such an approach does not take public opinion into consideration. The reason that towns such as Celebration and Seaside are built is to show people that this idea can still work. However, the inflexible principle that cities must have traditional forms does not accept the fact that the suburbs also work. Therefore, New Urbanists typically attempt to persuade people that traditional, higher density development work with environmental arguments and issues of traffic and safety that discourage suburban living. Furthermore, the obsession with European plazas as models helps New Urbanists to make their myth stronger. These ideas ignore the fact that cities such as Rome have a different history and context to our cities. This is not to say that we cannot learn from the European examples, but it is time we concentrate on finding solutions to our own problems on our own terms, without deferring to European solutions.

At the heart of the matter is the fact that the creation of traditional public spaces in Kendall seems to be foreign and romantic instead of real. The danger of creating romantic public spaces is that because they are not born of our needs and traditions, they are simply fashionable spaces that will die once we grow tired of them.

It is therefore important that the new public spaces in Kendall reflect the history of Kendall. The first chapter of the history of Kendall should be comprised of the understanding of human mobility and the mall. Kendall's early development owes a great deal, first, to Henry Flagler's extension of the railroad and later in the early sixties, to the construction of Dadeland Mall and the Palmetto Expressway. James E. Vance, Jr. geography professor at University of California, Berkeley, argues cities have been shaped since their beginning by human mobility. Dr. Vance states, "historical geography of transportation shows that most human history has had one dominant medium of transport for the mass of people..."[1] In Kendall the dominant mode of transport has been the automobile and its principal artery has been Kendall Drive. This street has undergone drastic transformation in the last forty years. It has served as an axis of connection to new developments, which have extended west of the original Kendall. In the beginning, Kendall Drive was the butt of jokes by those who lived in the city of Miami. Kendall Drive was known as "The Road to Nowhere." Soon it changed into a dynamic venue where commerce existed throughout its length. It is a

horizontal landmark; it not only serves as a point of departure but also as a place from which people orient themselves. Moreover, Kendall Drive is about movement, progress and dynamism. It is the stage of upon which, in our daily lives we show off our car, our contemporary symbol of well being. For these reasons Kendall Drive should be integrated into any new public space proposed for Kendall in order to highlight our experiences of suburban life as well as our history and our progress.

Any new public space in Kendall must also learn from the commercial mall, as it has been essential to the development and history of Kendall. Following, to some extent, the mall experience, any public space in Kendall should be able to host an indefinite number of activities such as festivals, commerce, education and ordinary communication between citizens. It must be as crowded as Dadeland Mall on a Saturday night, but must not die at the stroke of 10:30 p.m. unlike private commercial spaces; these new public spaces must be accessible at any time. They must be as efficient, measured and refined as the mall, but should dominate Kendall's context and essence. Paul Kaplan, editor for the *Miami News*, affirmed that Dadeland Mall, almost forty yeas ago, gave Kendall "both a physical and psychological starting point."[2] Any new public spaces in Kendall must continue this legacy. It must be adaptable as retail locations in the mall, able to endure even when the specific surroundings have changed. Accordingly, these public spaces must keep up with the times. They must affect the eye not only in its natural sense but also in its psychological and intellectual dimension.[3] They must be spatially dynamic and must accommodate themselves to the necessities of the ever-changing city. Rem Koolhaas says that the generic city must be "easy". This means that it "does not need maintenance." It has space for everyone. It has the ability to destruct itself and like wise to construct itself. The term "easy" implies freedom from difficulty. But Kendall, with its multicultural setting, is far from being free of conflict. It is not easy but must be practical and its public spaces must be practical as well, for to be practical is to be well adapted. Thus, any public place in Kendall must be as practical as the automobile, as efficient as the computer and as engaging as the television set, which lets the imagination, wander but captures specific instances of the viewed object.

A public space in Kendall must recall its real history and not a romanticized New Urbanist's version. While Rem Koolhaas is of the opinion that history imprisons us, Lewis Mumford writes the past is usable once it is interpreted as a learning process that triggers our thoughts and responsibilities toward the city. Furthermore, we are responsible for history because eventually we will become a part of it. The history of Kendall must be employed with the purpose and aim of educating its population, embracing the present context, while providing the tools to guide us into the future.

The city is not dead, as Rem Koolhaas wants us to believe, nor is it a museum of sorts, as the New Urbanist's would have it, where we can live amid pristine (even generic) ideas of traditional order. The city is both specific and real. It might be at the edge of a cliff, or even at death's door, but if it dies, we all die. The city is still alive. "We can leave the theater now…"[4] The city is awaiting you.

Endnotes

[1] James E. Vance, Jr. "Human Mobility and the Shaping of Cities" in Our Changing Cities, ed. John Fraser Hart (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 67

[2] Paul Kaplan, Miami's Neighborhoods, ed. Pat Morrissey (Miami: The Miami News, A Cox News Paper, 1982), 66

[3] Maria Balshaw et al, Urban Space and Representation, (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 8

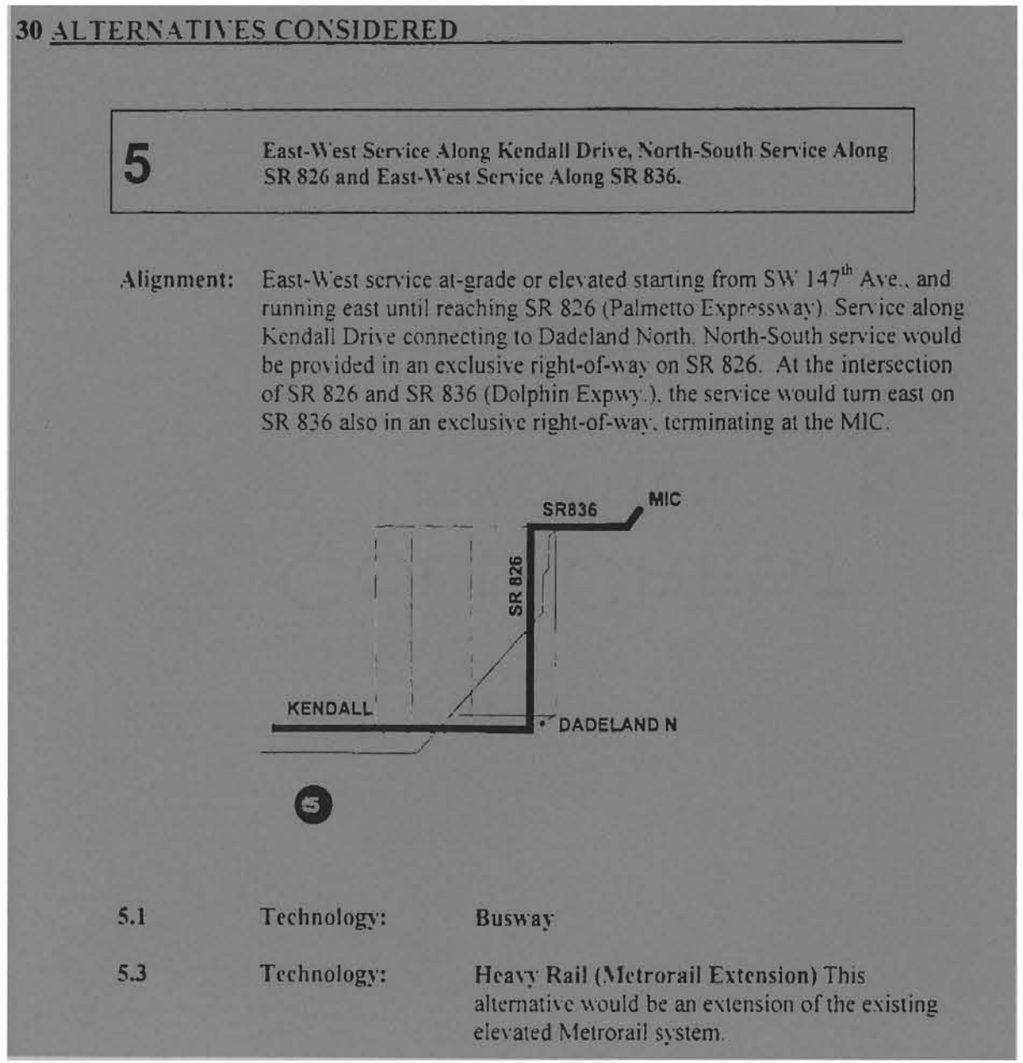
[4] Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau, S, M, L, XL: The Generic City, (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995), 1264

VII. The Project

After researching current prominent ideas about the city and its future, the diverse influences acting on the American city --especially those in the last century-- and the history and development of the Kendall area, I have proposed new types of public spaces for Kendall. A simultaneous critique of both the New Urbanist town and the Generic City, the new spaces proposed here work within the low density, spaced setting of the suburbs, providing one perspective on its future evolution. Ultimately, this study is an investigation of the definition of suburban public space, understood through the role that such spaces might play in the future development of Kendall, Florida.

7.0 Link to History:

Upon learning that the Miami-Dade Transit Authority had previously proposed a future extension of the Miami Metrorail system along Kendall Drive, I realized that this event could be the ideal impetus for the creation of new public spaces for Kendall. **(30)** It appeared ideal because the origins of Kendall date to Henry Flagler's southward extension of the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) to Homestead, and to the subsequent opening of a railway station where eventually Kendall would grow. In the context of contemporary Kendall, this new Metrorail station might generate a constant flow of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic throughout the day, as people move from one end of Kendall to the other and to other parts of the city beyond. These people would potentially benefit from public spaces that provided a range of services that included –but unlike the ubiquitous twentieth century shopping mall were not restricted to-- shopping and entertainment.



7.1 Kendall's Center

It is impossible to ignore the importance of Kendall Drive to the development and growth of Kendall as a (sub)urban area. This named, but as yet unincorporated part of Miami-Dade County, extends approximately nine miles east/ west, and approximately six miles north /south, of Kendall Drive. The street is not only historically significant as the original catalyst of westward development in the area, but continues to provide Kendall with an infinite number of services.

A careful analysis of existing conditions in the region reveals that in contrast to more traditional concentric urban configurations, Kendall Drive functions as Kendall's spine; it forms the gravitational –albeit linear-- core of the area. Kendall should thus be understood as a multi –or sequentially-- centered place. It is defined by a linear organization of multiple nodes which function as consecutive localized centers. **(31)** These nodes occur at major intersections, located at one-mile intervals, along Kendall Drive. Each is characterized by a commercial area surrounded by zones of residential development, the densest of which averages from 13 to 25 dwelling units per acre.

This organizational schema diverges dramatically from the traditional city center configuration of the 'Plan for Downtown Kendall' that was proposed for the Dadeland Mall area in 1998 by The Kendall Council of ChamberSOUTH, with New Urbanist consultants Dover, Kohl and Partners, and Duany, Plater-Zyberk Architects. It is easy to assume, as the Kendall Council of ChamberSOUTH has clearly done, that Dadeland Mall is the center of Kendall. However, before reaching such a conclusion it must be remembered that development in Kendall began along the eastern corridor that was shaped first by the FEC and later by Federal Highway 1. As a result, the Dadeland area is some twenty years older than, for example, the intersection at 137th Avenue and Kendall Drive. As such, it is a more mature and influential urban organization. However, is it not possible that in time 137th Avenue will be as important as Dadeland?

7.2 Choosing the site

The future Metrorail stations planned by MDTA could conceivably be constructed at the major intersections previously discussed. I chose to study the intersection at 137th Avenue and Kendall Drive as the potential locus of one of a series of public spaces that might characterize sequential developmental nodes along Kendall Drive. **(32)** This selection was based on the edge condition of its geographic location and on the fact that this area is currently the second densest in Kendall, after the Dadeland Mall district.

A site of generous proportions, capable of accommodating a varied program that ---in conjunction with the train station-- could produce a dynamic public space, currently defines its center. Today, this site is occupied by strip store commercial development whose principal structure creates a visual and physical separation between its residential northern side and Kendall Drive at its southern boundary. This shopping center houses big box retail stores like K-Mart and Office Max as well as several smaller stores and out parcels. The site is bordered on the north by townhomes and apartment buildings. On the south side it opens up to Kendall Drive and immediately to a mini-shopping center with small retail stores. On the east side it neighbors apartment buildings and a

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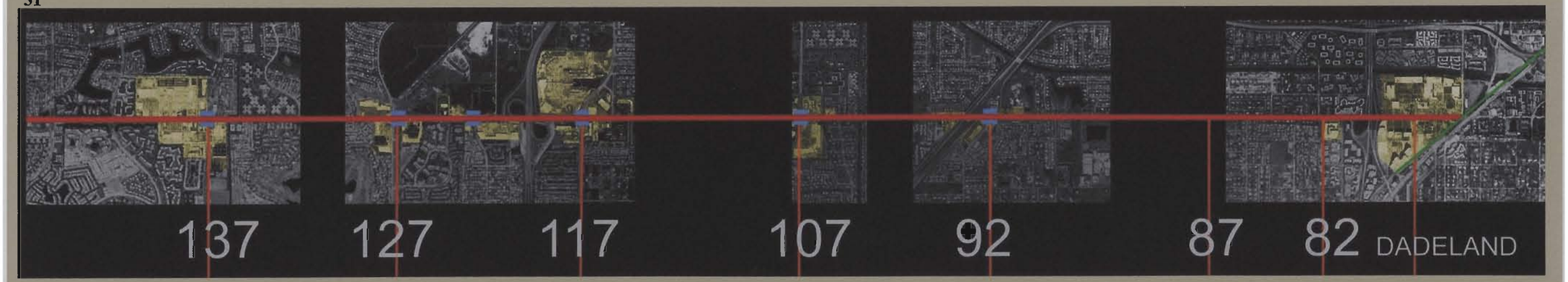
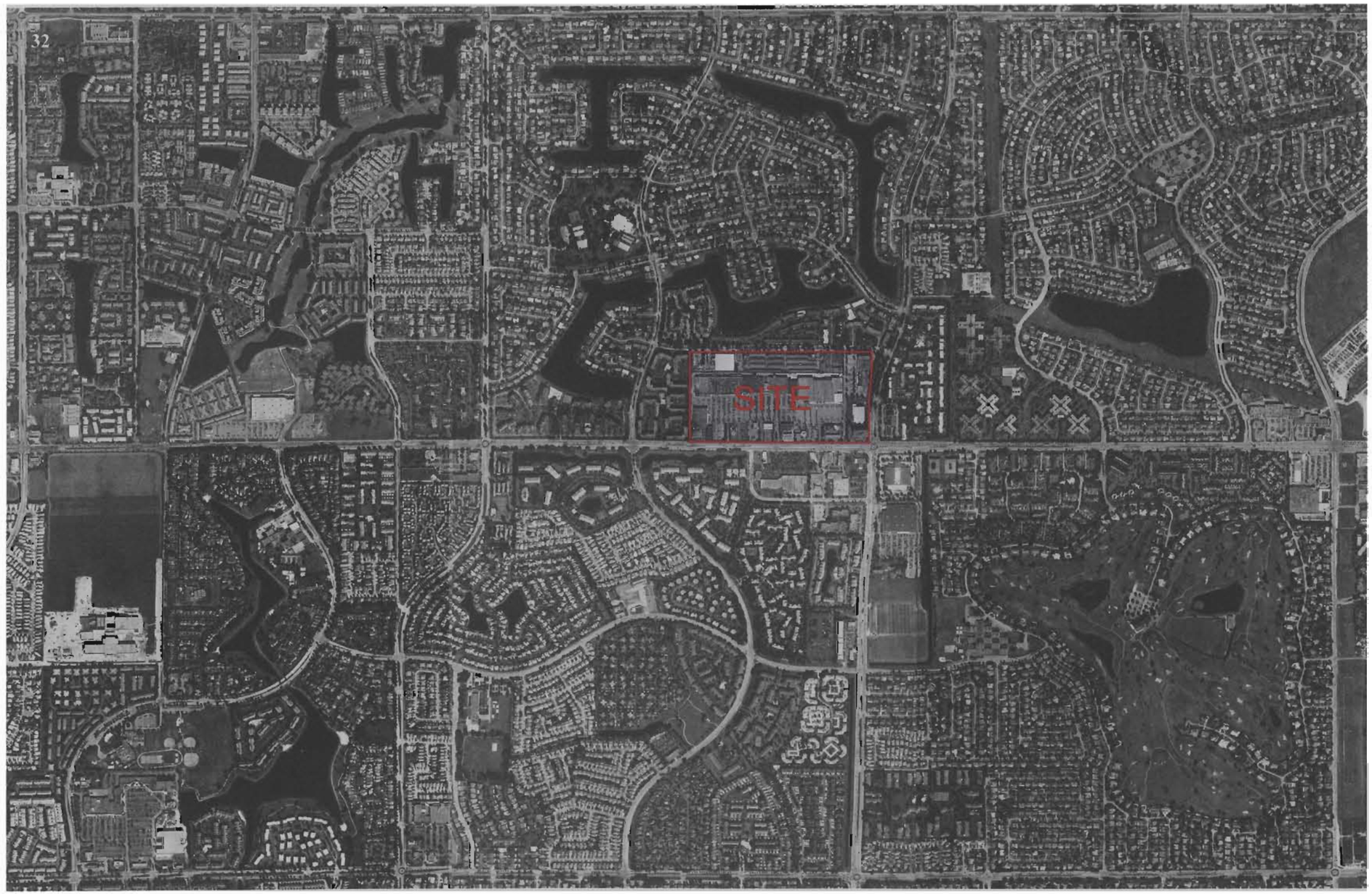


Possible sites for Metrorail stations

Commercial & residential densities arround possible stations


32
SITE

small commercial area. Finally, the site is faced with 3 and 4 story apartment buildings at the west end. **(33-36)**

This site is presently occupied by an immense parking lot (it covers almost one half of the 2,508,000 square ft site) parallel to Kendall Drive, which, for most of the year, remains empty. Only during the Christmas shopping season does this parking area fill up with automobiles. Even in its fully occupied state, it does little to generate community identity or cohesiveness. Similarly, the big box retail that it supports takes advantage of the consuming power of the community without offering any civic benefit in return. Hence, it appeared possible to suggest that the community of Kendall at SW 137th Street might recommend another kind of program for this site that could, in turn, help this part of Kendall become a better place.

7.3 Scale

Choosing this site involved understanding the scale at which the project was to be handled. Two worldwide public places --Piazza San Pietro in Rome and Piazza San Marco in Venice-- as well as a local plaza –the Miami Cultural Center Plaza, designed by Phillip Johnson for Downtown Miami in the 1980's-- were superimposed on the site in order to establish scale. **(37)** The nature and scale of the twentieth century suburb became astonishingly clear. The site, which measures 2,508,000 square feet, is of extraordinary scale by traditional urban standards: It is approximately six times the size of Piazza San Pietro and 16 times the size of Piazza San Marco. The grid of the city of Miami was then superimposed on the site in order to understand its scale in the local context. Again the exercise revealed the site's astonishing scale: the site accommodated 11 Miami standard city blocks in length and a proportionate number of blocks in width. **(38)**

A method of organization was necessary that would remain true to the much loved (by its residents), spaced nature of the suburb, while generating a series of public spaces at different scales that maintained a more defined reciprocal relationship between void and solid. The proportionately scaled void / solid relationship of the traditional European city does not exist as an outdoor condition in the twentieth century suburb, where buildings are typically objects that float in largely undifferentiated, comparatively vast space. Yet it is significant to note that this condition continues to be considered optimal for collective inhabitation, and that it is the *sine qua non* of such interior, public settings as shopping malls, where it provides people with a sense of definition and security.

7.4 History of Site

The first attempt to find an appropriate organizing method was to investigate the site through aerial photographs starting in 1963 --when the site and its surroundings were still part of the Everglades wetlands-- and extending to the present day. **(39)** In the early photographs the only noticeable entities on the site were a large mangrove hammock (about 1000 feet in diameter) located at its northwest end, and several smaller ones scattered throughout. These tree islands constituted relatively high ground (typically 2 –3 inches above the surrounding ground plane) and acted as points of refuge for animals during Florida's wet months, when water from Lake Okeechobee fed into the Everglades. With subsequent waves of development, this area was drained and filled to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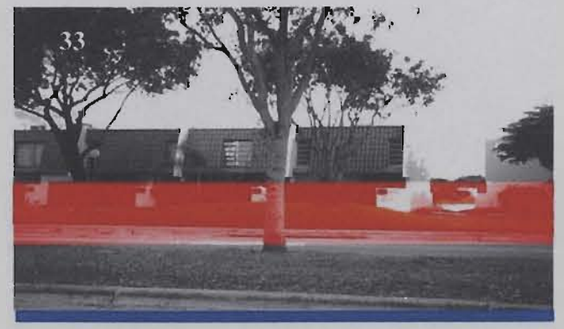
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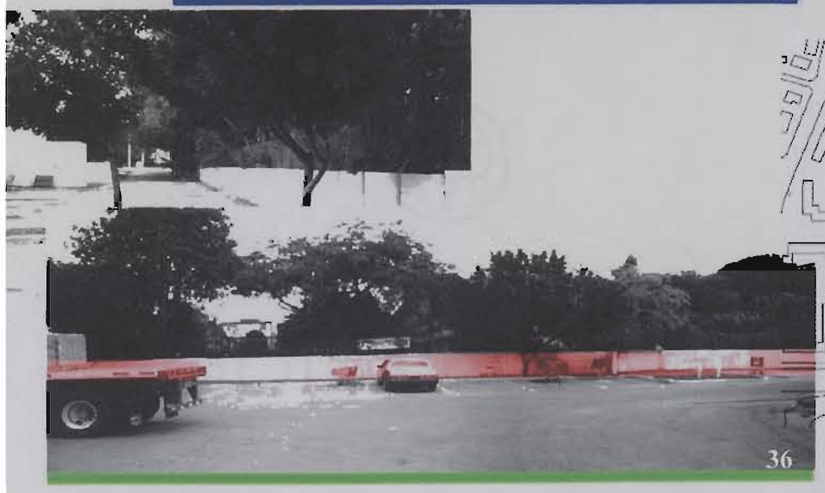
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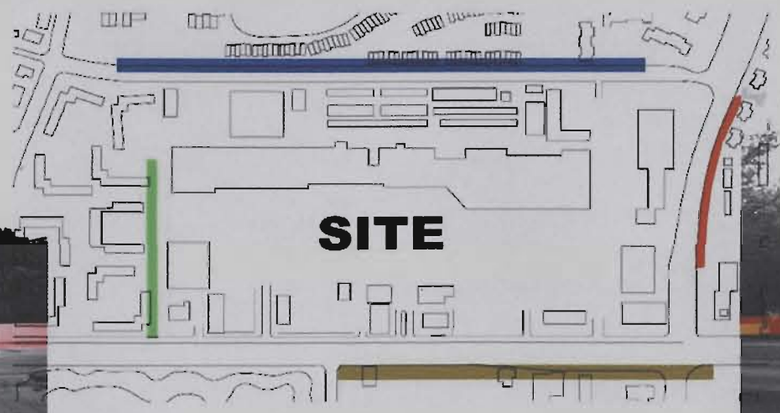
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allow for construction.

From these observations, the first organizational scheme was proposed. (**40-41**) Here, the first intervention included the re-introduction of water to the site through the creation of a lake whose form was derived from that of the observed hammock. Most of the existing buildings were eliminated, except for the long retail structure in the middle of the site. That structure was retained for two reasons: first, it appeared that it would be beneficial economically to retain and work with the existing building. More important, however, was the hope that keeping the building would allow this new part of the city to add a layer of history that in the suburbs barely exist due to its newness and to the fact that it changes so rapidly, immediately outdating and reinventing itself. The program (which at this point was both commercial and residential) was distributed horizontally and vertically around it. The commercial aspect of the program was located on the ground level for customers to have better access. The upper stories were left for residential use, in order to create separation and privacy between the dwelling and shopping activities.

Although driven by historical patterns, this link left many loose ends, as it did not adequately grasp the scale and the context of the site. The proposed buildings were few and tall. They seemed to absorb the site as pieces of sculpture in the largely horizontal suburban landscape. One positive aspect of this scheme, however, was that it began to open the site to the surrounding area.

7.5 Context

I then conducted a thorough survey of the site and its surroundings. This included a detailed study of how the site was linked to the surrounding community, and observations/ mappings of how

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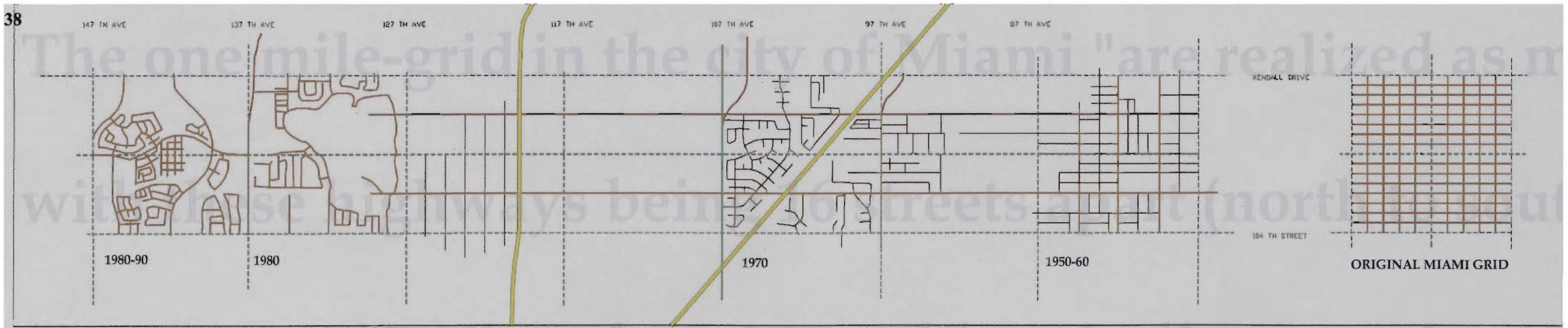
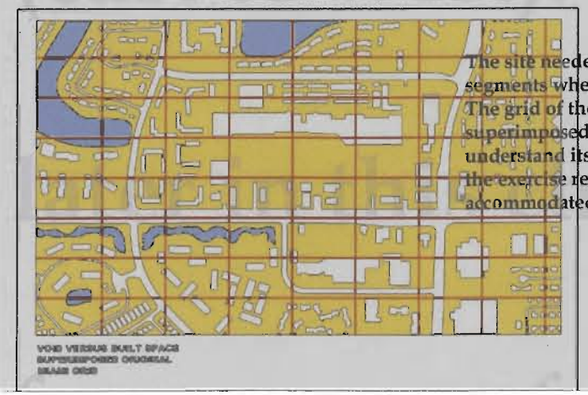
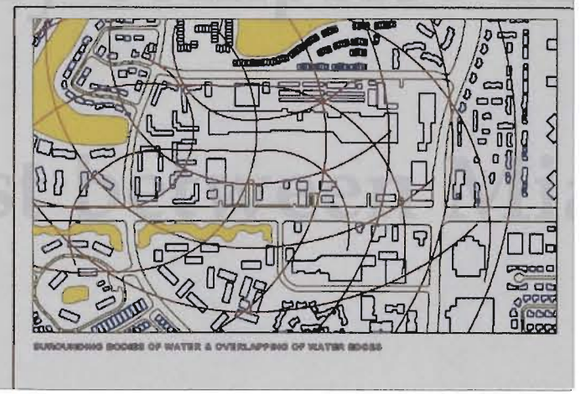




The site needed to be organized in smaller segments where program might be distributed. The grid of the city of Miami was then superimposed on the site in order to understand its scale in the local context. Again the exercise revealed that the site accommodated 11 Miami standard blocks.

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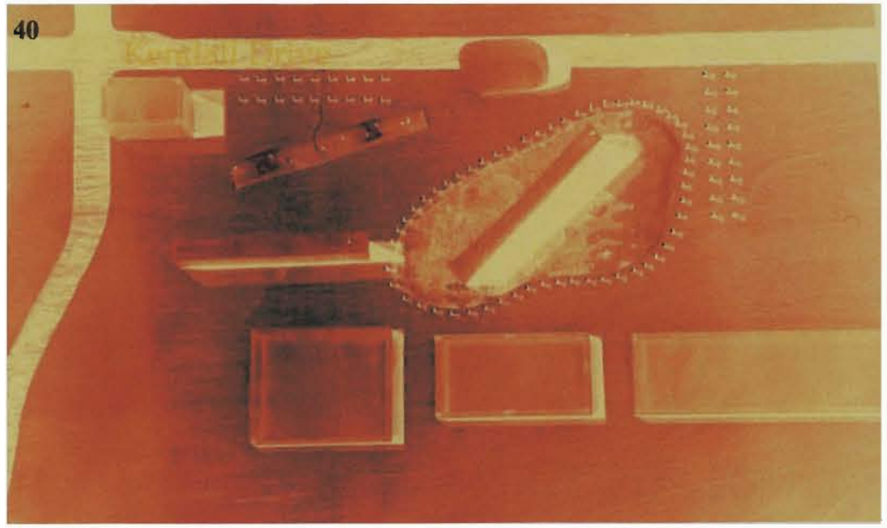
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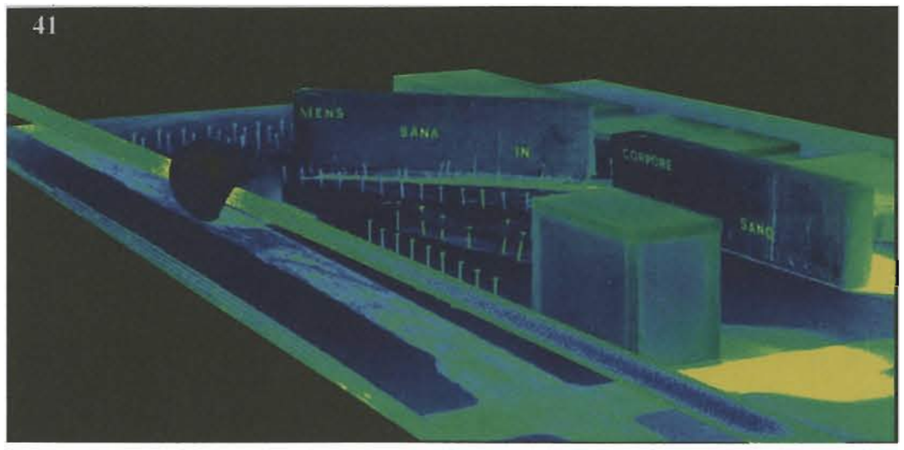
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the site was accessed (both vehicular and pedestrian traffic were included in the study) by adjacent residential communities. It was interesting to discover that although obstacles existed which seemed to discourage traffic between the strictly commercial site and adjacent residential neighborhoods, there existed shy, unofficial pathways of communication that established a dialogue among these places. (42)

Within a square mile radius beyond the site, analogous situations were discovered among residential neighborhoods. This area contained 27 independently developed and platted communities that did not formally communicate. (**43**) In the event that some linkage existed, it was minimal --as if to imply that the neighborhoods wanted to be together, yet separate. It seemed that people desired both isolation and the option to relate to others. This is exactly what the physical form of suburban life dictates: We appear to be all for togetherness, but not constantly. From these observations I developed the idea of filtering.

7.6 Filter

Webster's Dictionary of the English Language defines filtering as "to join gradually, as in a stream of traffic." Typically, filtering is defined as the process by which some elements of a given whole are isolated from others of its elements. Although the design process that produces the suburban public space of this thesis follows just such a process of isolation of elements, the word has also become a metaphor for the gradually established relationship among members of a community that results from their participation in the life of the sequential public places (events) that might come to built all along Kendall Drive. Opening the site by a method of filtering meant that the site

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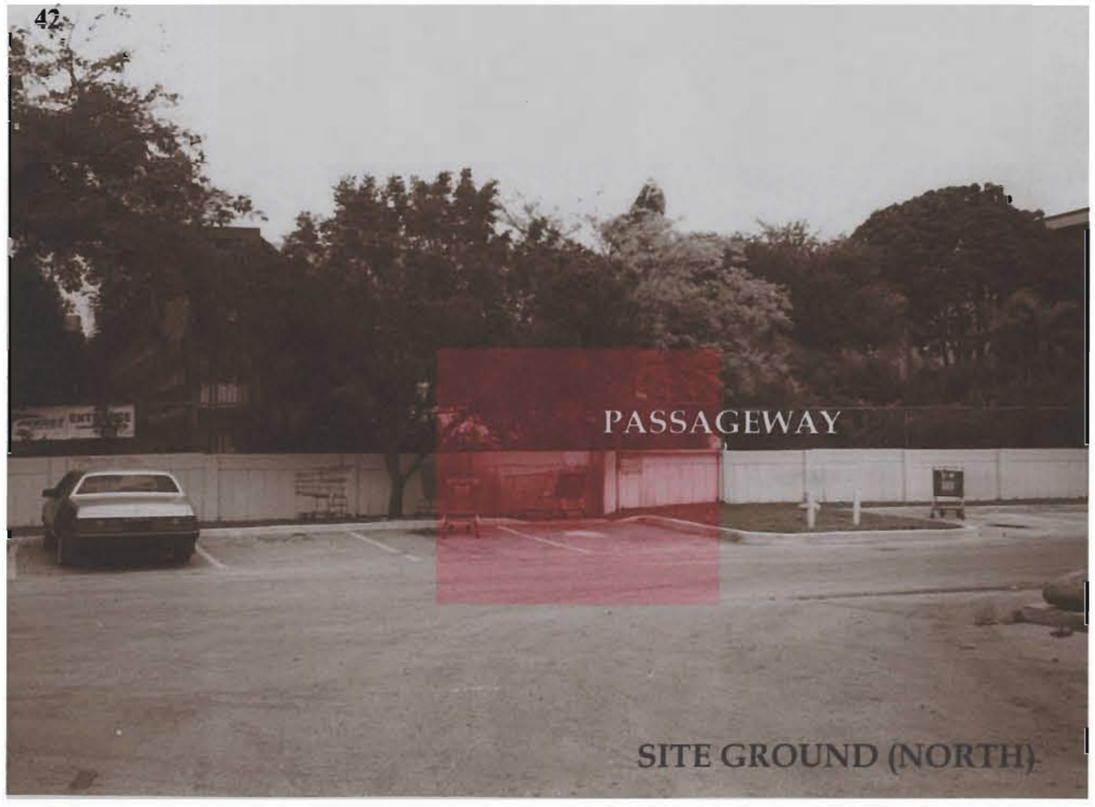
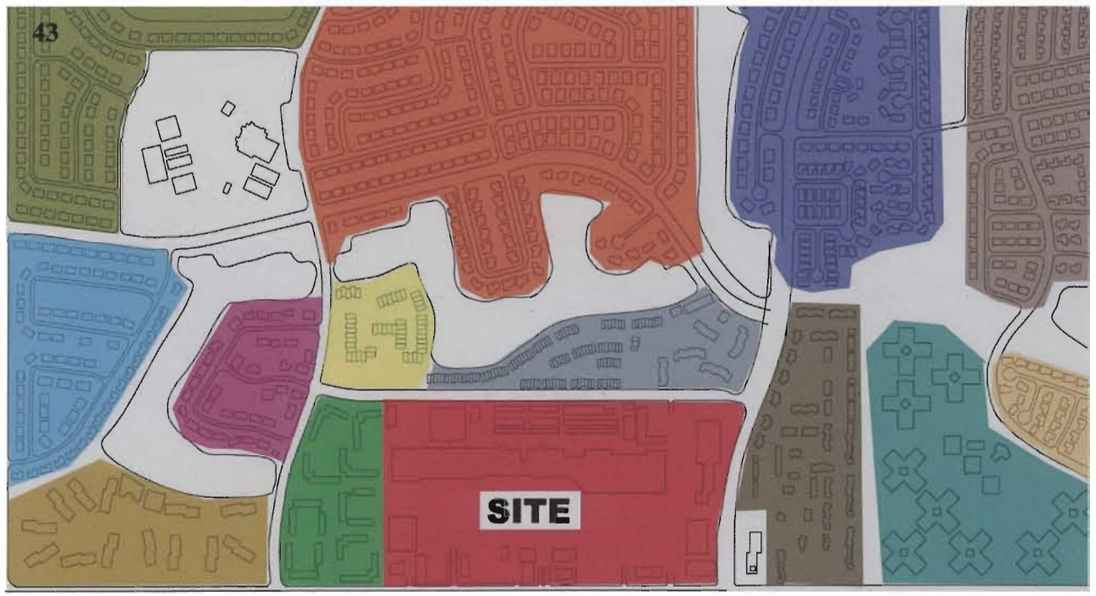




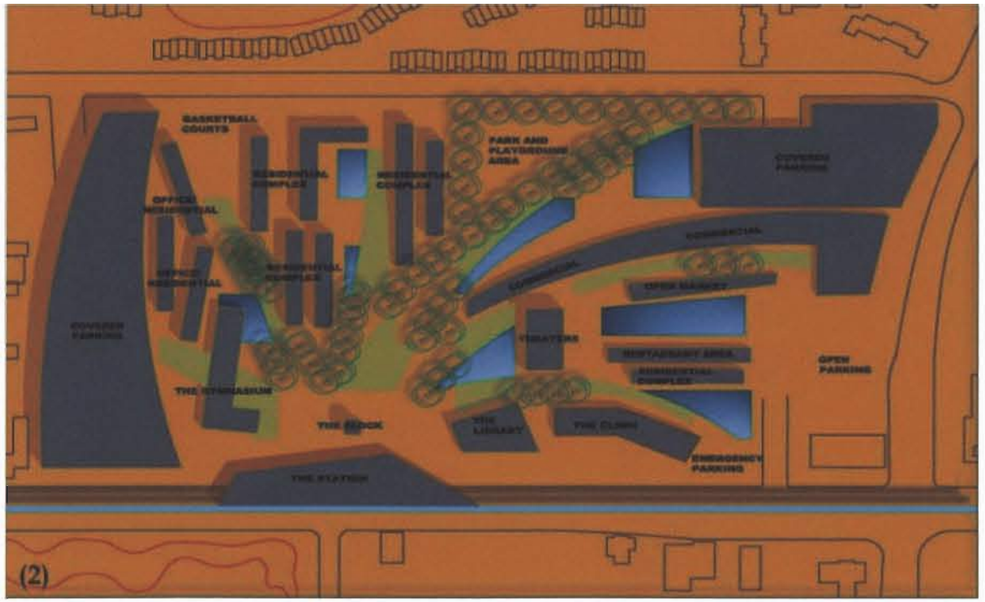
would invite members of the community -- including those sections of the city that have access to the site via Metrorail-- to participate in the activities offered by the site's program. Stratifying those different elements that were a part of the project seemed a reasonable strategy for establishing this filtering system. The different layers were superimposed to derive a geometry that reasonably responded to the program, the site and its context.

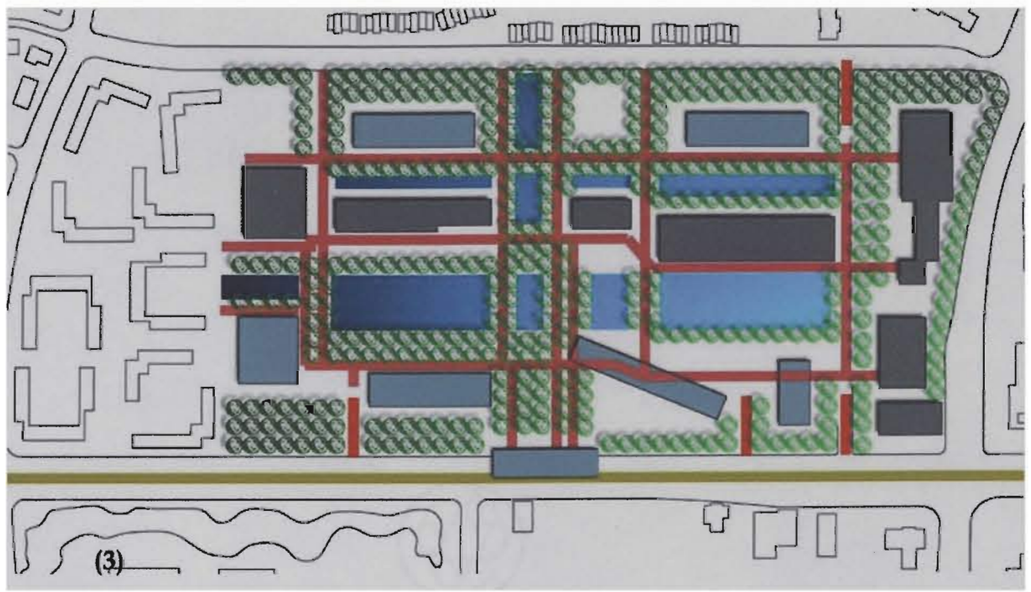
7.7 Layering

The superimposition of different isolated elements resulted in a geometry new to the site, that allowed it to be understood in smaller segments and reduced its overall scale. The layers were identified in accordance with my earlier research, encompassing the specific physical characteristics of the site, the history of Kendall, as well as the broader history of the suburbs in America. I made numerous attempts to arrive at a viable accommodation among all the elements operating on this site and the specificity of the immediate context. (44) These images record the intermediate process from which the final proposal was derived.

The following layers were isolated and developed in order to construct an overall scheme:

Water: This layer uses water as an organizational device while establishing connections between the project and its natural environment. Historically, the site was flooded for part of every year. In addition, water is an element that can work naturally to reduce ambient temperature on extremely hot summer days in South Florida.





Note, for example, that the first proposal does not have a central space that brings all other of its spaces together. By contrast, the second proposal has that central space but it creates long barriers of constructed elements that cause people to walk long distances and secludes the site from the neighboring communities. The third proposal fails to create a hierarchy of spaces and again, walking distances become too long for the kind of pedestrian environment this place seeks to engender –even in a suburban context.

Vehicular Access: The site was mapped according to current vehicular usage patterns primarily from Kendall Drive, but also from the site periphery. Parking became a necessary corollary of vehicular access (see below).

Pedestrian Traffic: In accordance with the findings of earlier research, the site organization presupposed a preference for pedestrian access to large segments of the site, and assumed an additional dimension as neighboring communities were implicitly integrated into the network of pathways being created on the site. These pathways generated access points that were located immediately across from the main entrances of neighboring residential communities. The superposition of the existing patterns of vehicular access and possible patterns of pedestrian traffic, segmented the site into more manageable dimensions than those at which we the site currently operates. Simultaneously, the project recognized the potential for future growth and increased density on the site. **(52)** It therefore sought to maintain future means of access to the site, by extending its pedestrian pathways to the streets --especially on the north side of the site, where a larger number of residential complexes have been built. If, in the future, the area should become denser, then these pathways have the potential to become streets that invite vehicular movement back to the site.

Existing buildings: Some of the existing buildings were retained on the site (specifically, those at the east and west extremities) while a majority of the others were discarded. This action was justified by the fact that the suburban tradition renders buildings a nearly disposable commodity –they are seldom built to last for long periods of time because the suburbs are theorized to change at a very fast pace. While I found some evidence to the contrary in my earlier studies of Kendall, the preponderance of evidence supported that theoretical position. I decided to eliminate the main building crossing the site from east to west, as it interrupted the flow of traffic in the north/ south direction. The scale of this building also presented a problem. Initially, I had proposed that the building be retained, but altered to allow pedestrian and vehicular traffic through it. However the exercise failed because the segmentation required was too severe to be economically viable. Thus, in the time honored American urban tradition, I decided to start from a clean slate. **(45)**

Landscape: This layer addressed both the historic and current natural environment, as well as its typically hot weather, by proposing ample shaded areas where people can comfortably walk in an open-air environment. **(46)** Trees recommended by consulting landscape architect Juan Antonio Bueno, were primarily Royal Oaks. These have a wide canopy ranging between 50 and 70 feet in diameter. Royal Oaks are also very good at withstanding hurricane force winds, as their root system spreads more widely than their canopy. Also the landscape helped to enclose and define space, allowing the possibility of producing open/ void relationships in a built environment of relatively low density.

Program: This layer underwent many changes during the course of the project's development. I consulted various resources to arrive at a final slate of programmatic uses for the site that also drew extensively upon my research on the nature of the suburbs. The American city has been influenced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OUTLINE OF EXISTING BUILDING
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1. EXISTING BUILDINGS TO BE RETAINED
2. PROPOSED NEW BUILDINGS

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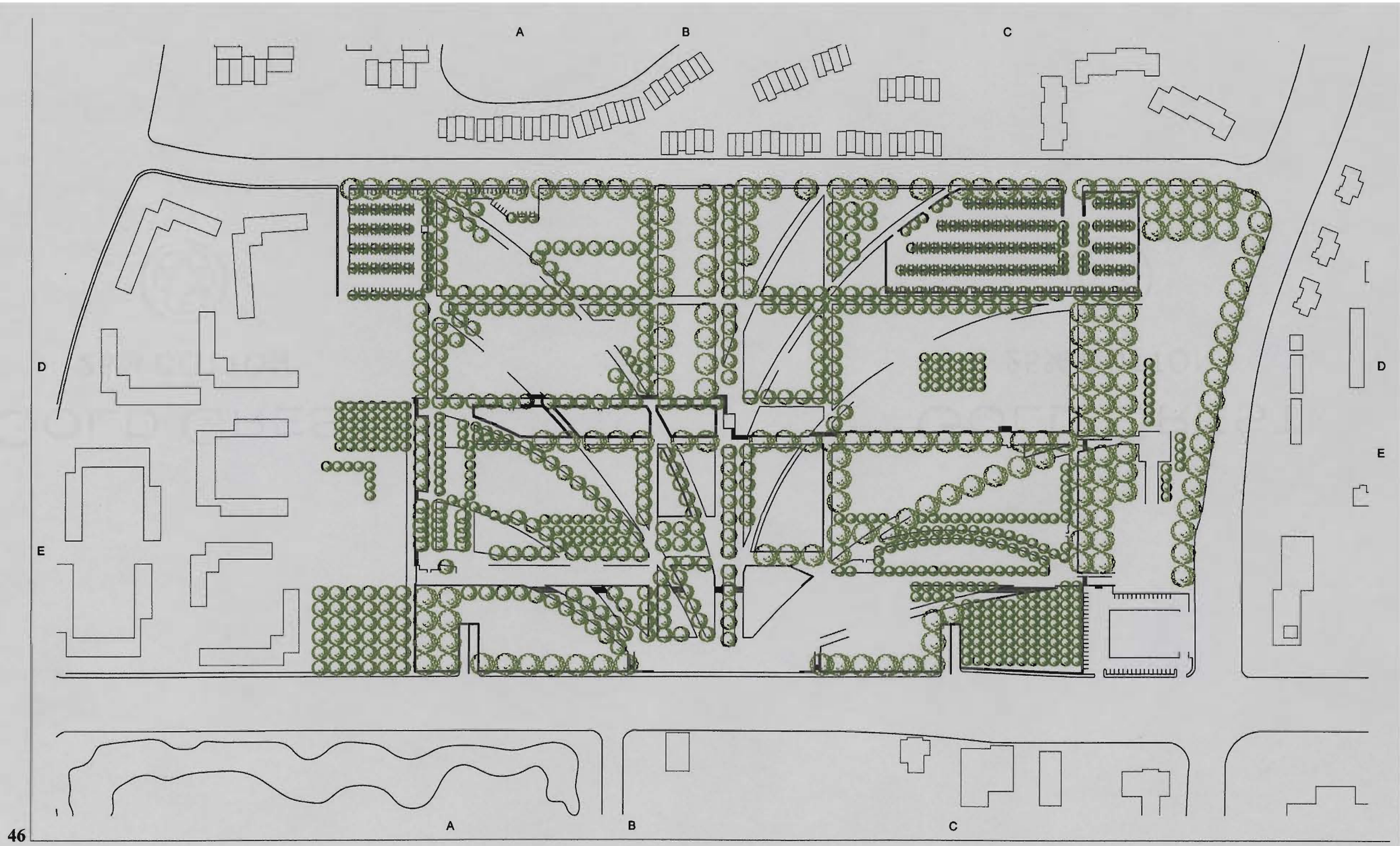

allowing the possibility of producing open/ void relationships in a built environment of relatively low density.

Program: This layer underwent many changes during the course of the project's development. I consulted various resources to arrive at a final slate of programmatic uses for the site that also drew extensively upon my research on the nature of the suburbs. The American city has been influenced by people like Thomas Jefferson who preached in the 18th century, that the city was responsible for all the evils in society. In the 19th century, Henry Ford held that the decentralization of cities was the key to improving the quality of life that cities could afford. Similarly, in the 20th century, Frank Lloyd Wright's proposal for Broadacre City reinforced the idea of decentralization and once again echoed the cry of a Jeffersonian agrarian society's rejection to the centralized/ industrialized city.

Looking back at our local history, the influx of people to Kendall accelerated in the 1960's. These were people who wanted a more spacious, private place to live and raise families than the traditional city could afford, and who ultimately thought no differently of the city than Jefferson, Ford or Wright. I recalled the Latin phrase *"Mens sana in corpore sano"*. It reminded me that suburban development is the product of a long-held belief that areas outside cities are the best and healthiest places to live.

Consequently, I developed the idea of a Wellness Center and Park for this site, whose program was composed of the following elements, each of which was, in turn, researched and verified for viability, and each of which was proposed to exist as a single story structure, to disappear under the canopy of Royal Oaks that would cover the site:

1. Wild Oats Natural Foods Market	40,000 sf
2. Clinic (preventive medicine)	60,000 sf
3. Pharmacy	30,000 sf
4. Fitness club	45,000 sf
5. Dance studio	8,500 sf
6. Sports store	45,000 sf
7. Open market	48,000 sf
8. Health food restaurant areas	34,800 sf
9. Day spa	12,000 sf
10. Running paths	
11. Bookstore	45,000 sf
12. Recreation areas	
13. Basketball and tennis courts	
14. Playground areas	
15. Train station	12,000 sf
16. Martial arts academy	18,500 sf
17. Indoor sports complex	64,000 sf
18. Parking	669,200 sf

Parking: Taking into consideration that the suburb's principal *modus operandi* is the automobile, it is impossible to build any project of this scale in a suburban context without the ubiquitous parking

garage. However, the approach I took was to partially bury the parking structure beneath the site with the aim of freeing it of vehicular traffic and making the park possible. (**47**) This way, the parking structure extends the definition of suburban infrastructure to include functionality, even as it graciously becomes both park and public space. The project required one parking space per 200 sf of commercial development. Thus, for 462,800 total sf of developed property on this site, 2,314 parking spaces were the minimum requirement by code. I was able to build 2,832 parking spaces below grade and 527 above grade, providing more parking than the required minimum and allowing daily commuters to leave automobiles at the metro station en route to their remote employment locations.

To test the potential success of this program on my site I began to research each of its elements by mapping the similar places already in operation in the vicinity, as well as their distances from the site. (**48**) I located places like *L.A. Fitness Center*, the *Sports Authority*, among others, and interviewed several general managers who provided marketing information as to how stores are typically located and their various programmatic requirements (including gross area, floor plan geometry etc). As an example, the general manager of the *Sports Authority* located near the site said that the area required for an analogous suburban franchise was 45,000 square feet. He claimed that there were no restrictions in floor plan geometry but that it was preferable for the store to be rectangular. As far as similar stores that compete with the *Sports Authority,* he mentioned *Oshman's* and affirmed that if *Oshman's* were to open a store on my site (which is one half mile away from his store) it would not affect him. From this and similar conversations, I concluded that competing retail outlets that exist within relatively close quarters of the site are beneficial to the community since choice improves prices and service without chilling development.

7.8 Conclusion:

Upon superimposing these layers on the site a series of public spaces resulted. These public spaces indirectly relate to neighboring residential communities through the creation of pathways that connect the new program to these neighborhoods at their points of entry. (**49-54**) Along these various pathways, the resulting voids among buildings acquire life, as the people who participate in program-generated activities interact in them. Different activities take place along these pathways, including running, talking, leisurely walking and newspaper reading. (**55-**)Moreover, these pathways culminate in the Metrorail station that opens the site and ultimately links Kendall to the rest of Miami. The public spaces in this project are scattered in programmed and un-programmed places throughout the site: in the buildings but also in the void spaces; in the pathways but also among the trees. These public spaces are elastic, accessible, and not primarily commercial. They are real, not artificially contrived. They are not, I would hold, sterile places.

Although this project, its site and program, were derived from the present context of Kendall, it was with full recognition of the important role of the past in its development, and of the area's potential future directions. It is easy to criticize the American suburbs and to forecast their demise, but in fact, by all appearances, the suburbs are here to stay. Although the quality of collective life that they provide might be fruitfully improved, they in fact respond to the genuine desires and aspirations of those who live in them.

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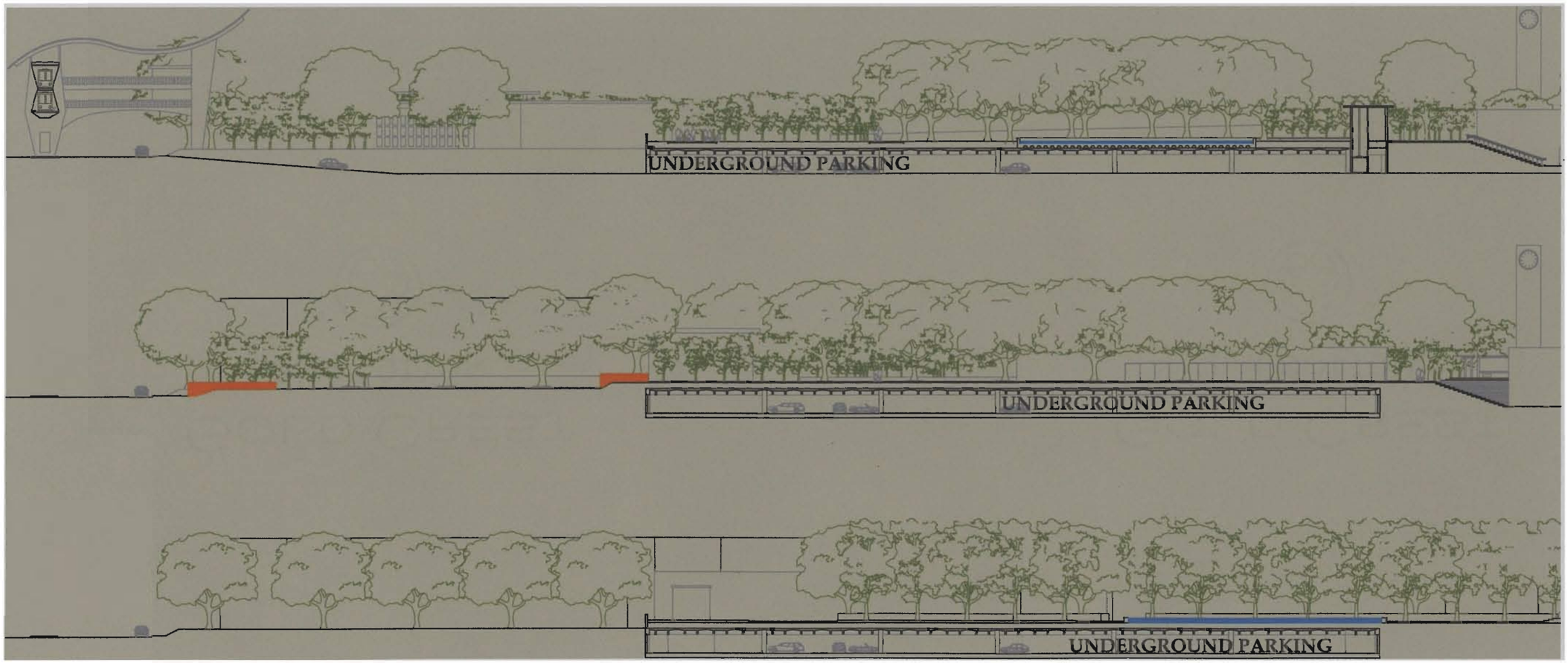
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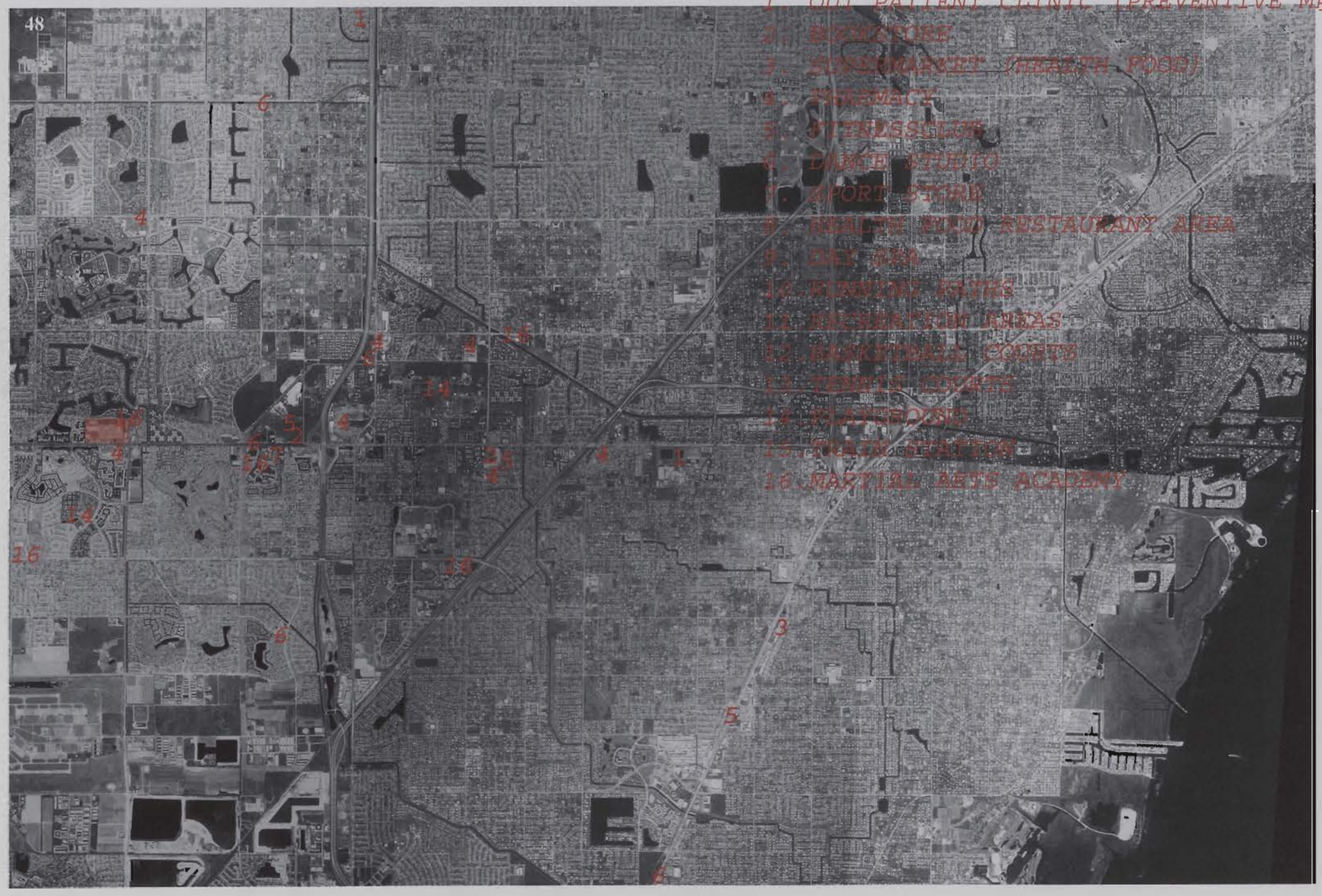
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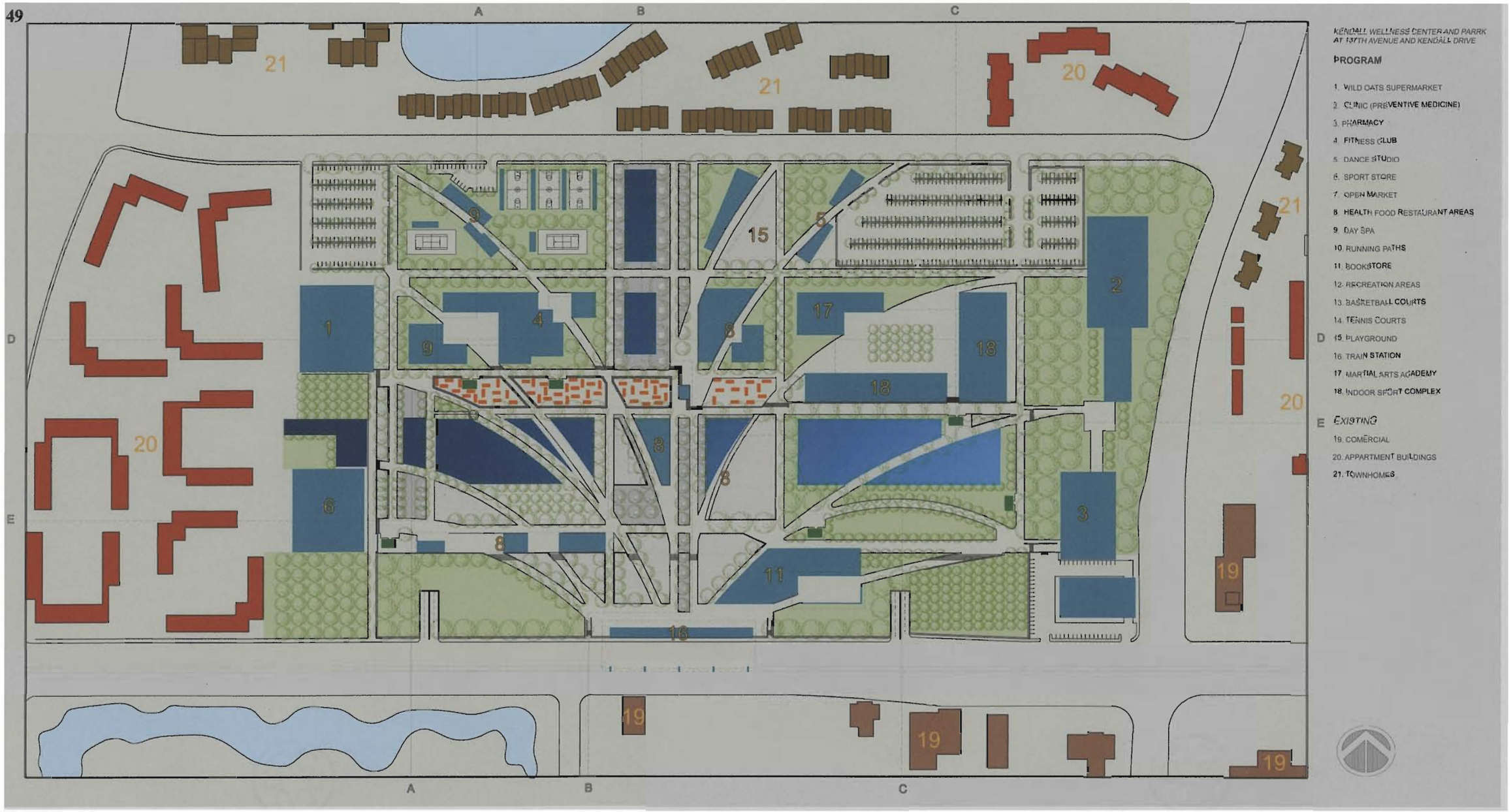
1. OUT PATIENT CLINIC (PREVENTIVE MEDICINE)
2. EXERCISE
3. SUPERMARKET (HEALTH FOOD)
4. PHARMACY
5. FITNESSCLUB
6. DANCE STUDIO
7. SPORT STORE
8. HEALTH FOOD RESTAURANT AREA
9. DAY SPA
10. BOWLING ALLEYS
11. RECREATION AREAS
12. BASKETBALL COURTS
13. TENNIS COURTS
14. CLUBHOUSE
15. HEALTH STATION
16. MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY



KENDALL WELLNESS CENTER AND PARRK
AT 137TH AVENUE AND KENDALL DRIVE

PROGRAM

1. WILD OATS SUPERMARKET
2. CLINIC (PREVENTIVE MEDICINE)
3. PHARMACY
4. FITNESS CLUB
5. DANCE STUDIO
6. SPORT STORE
7. OPEN MARKET
8. HEALTH FOOD RESTAURANT AREAS
9. DAY SPA
10. RUNNING PATHS
11. BOOKSTORE
12. RECREATION AREAS
13. BASKETBALL COURTS
14. TENNIS COURTS
15. PLAYGROUND
16. TRAIN STATION
17. MARTIAL ARTS AGADEMY
18. INDOOR SPORT COMPLEX

EXISTING

19. COMERCIAL
20. APPARTMENT BUILDINGS
21. TOWNHOMES

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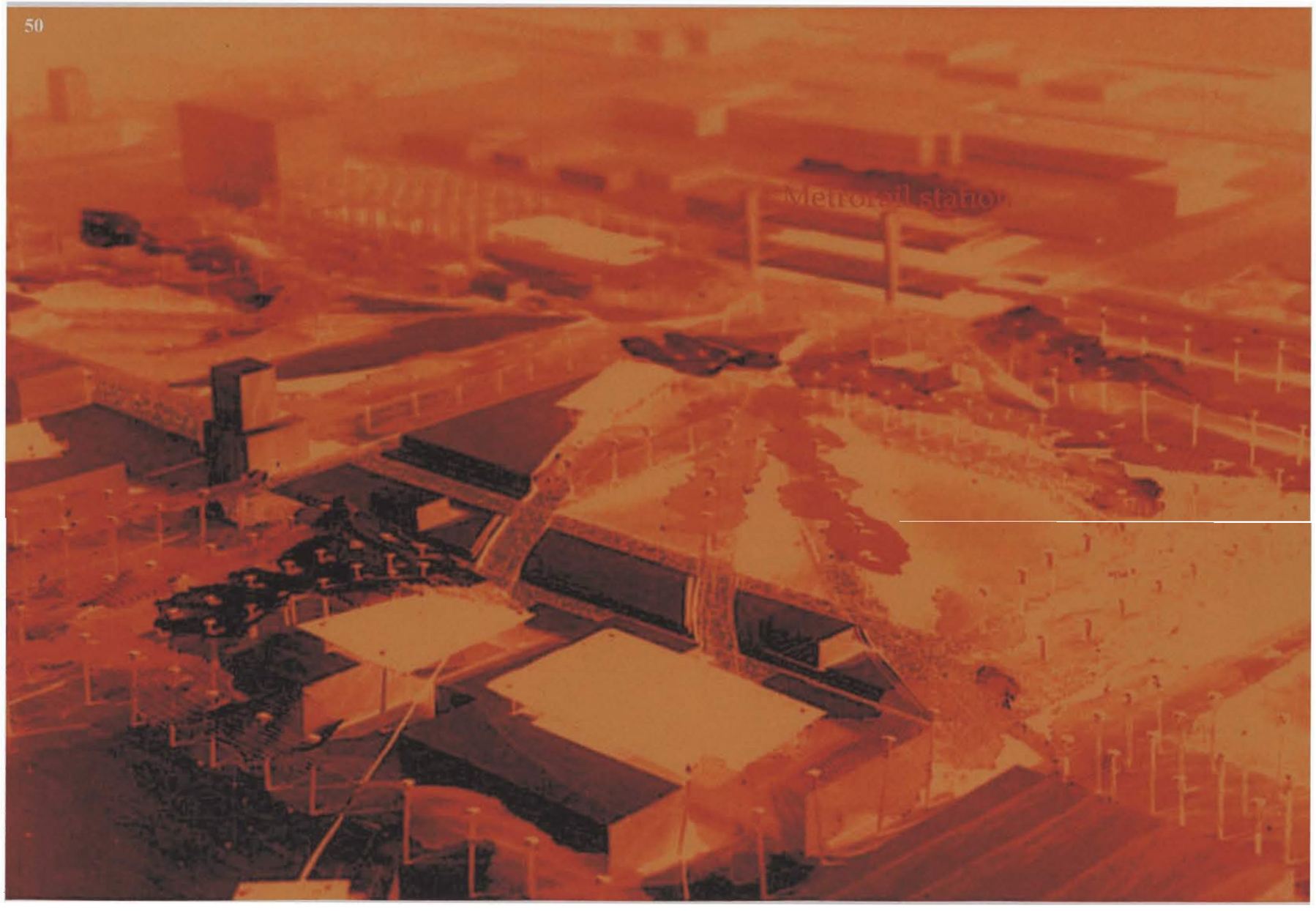

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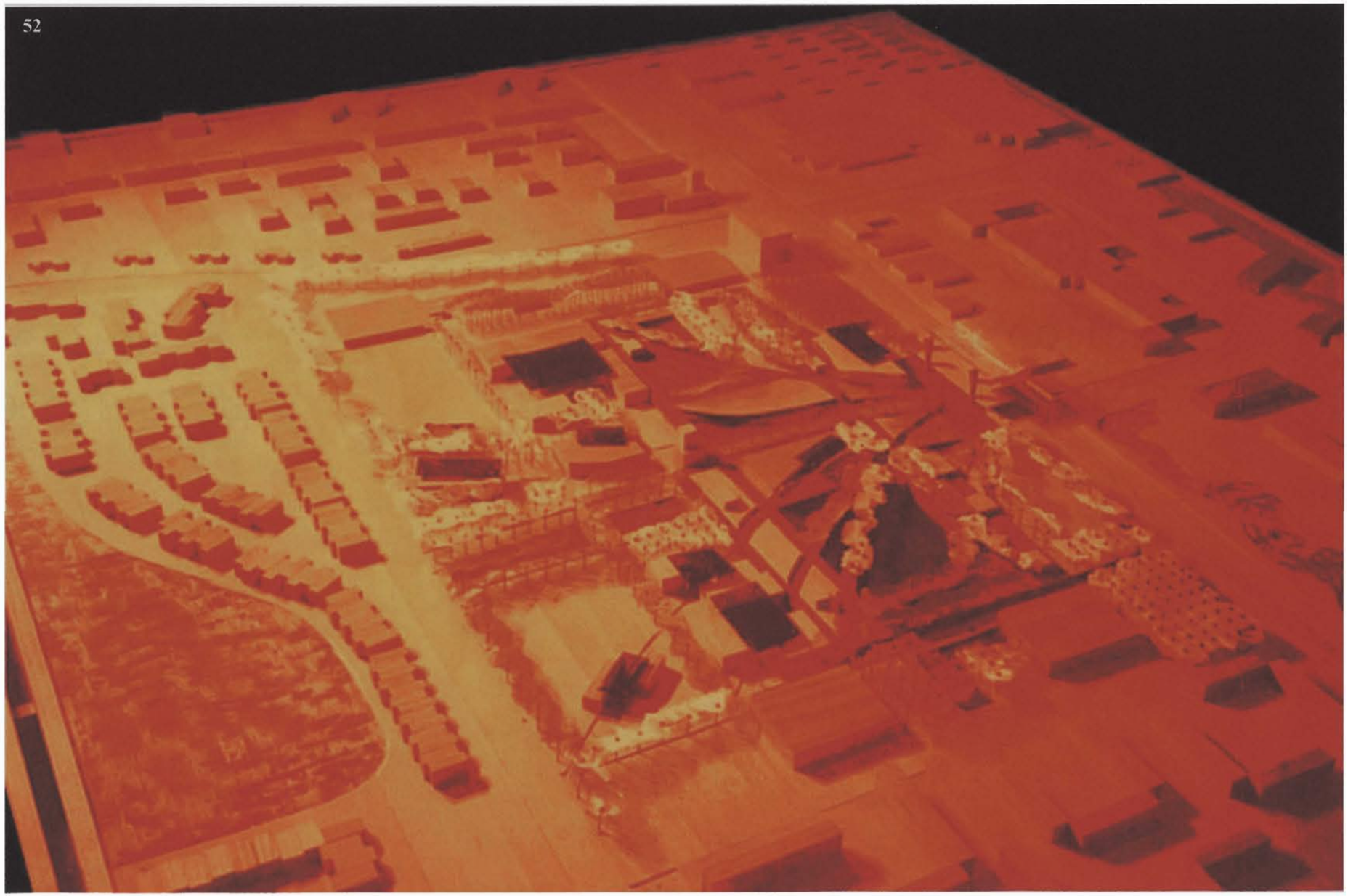

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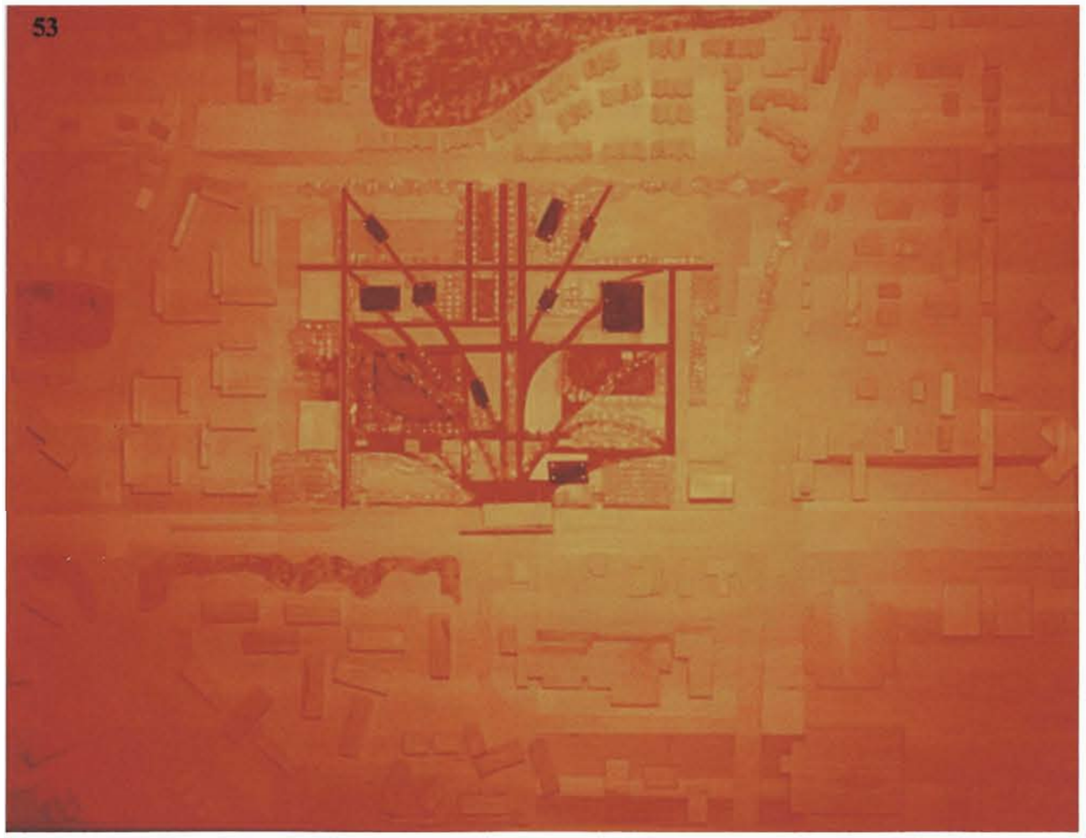

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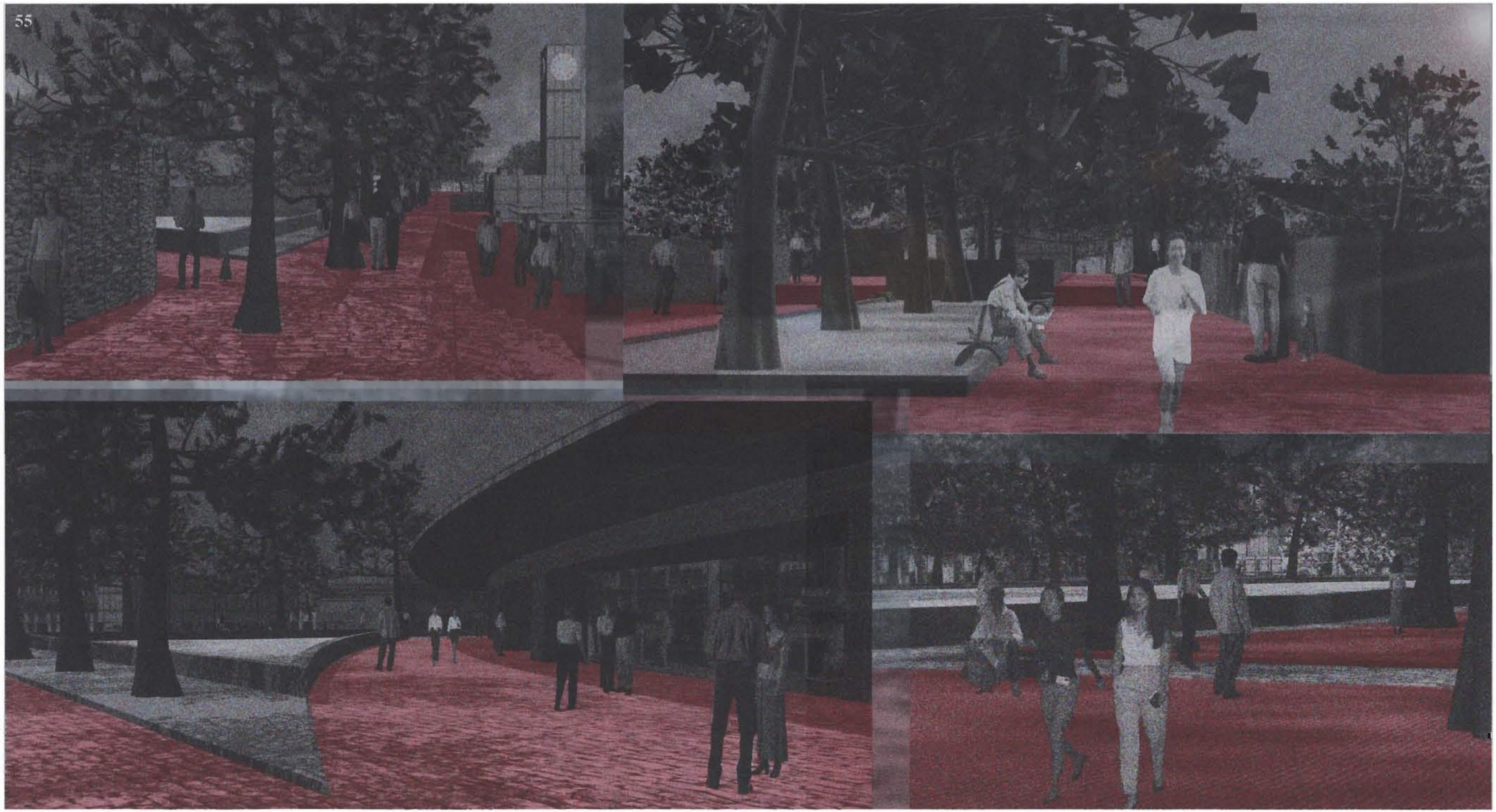
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