



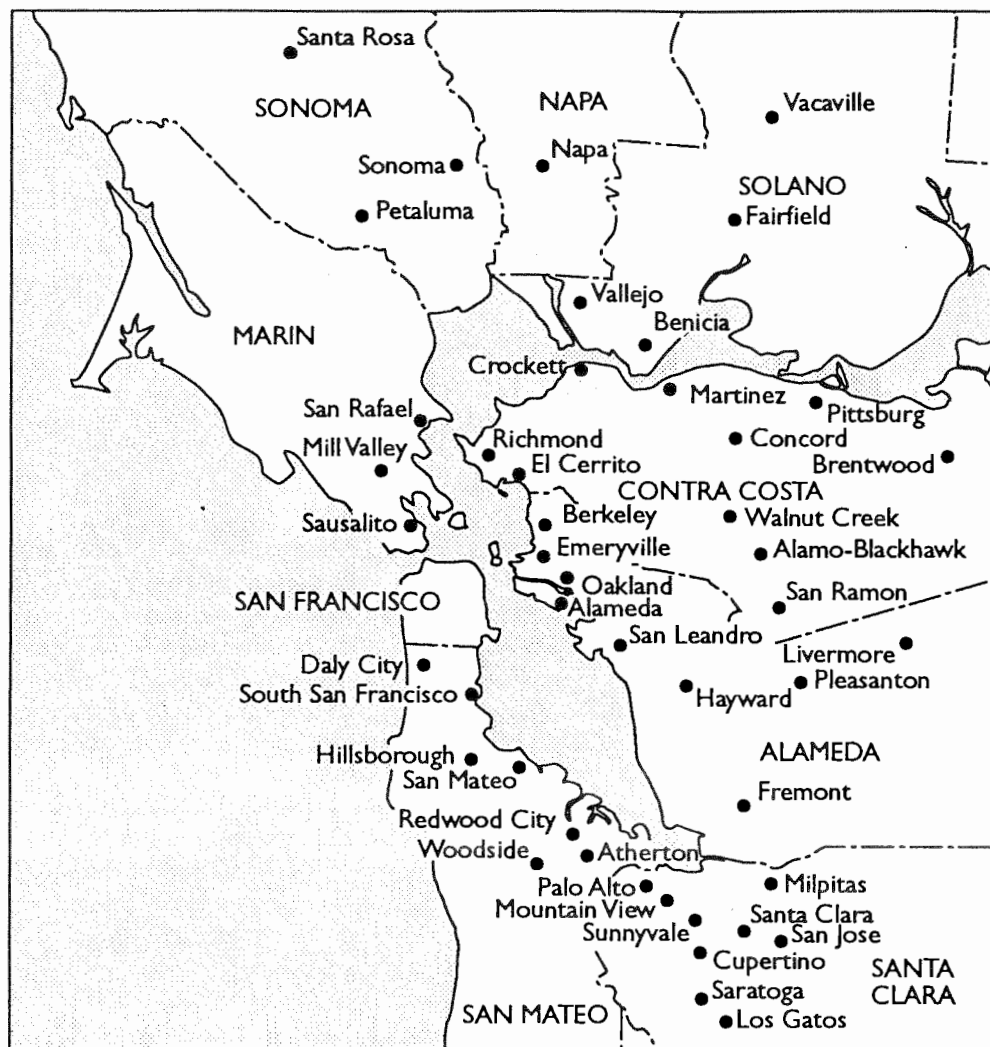
LANDSCAPE AND CITY LIFE: FOUR ECOLOGIES OF RESIDENCE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Richard Walker

Urban landscapes are vast monuments to the prevailing social order. They can be read for clues to the ways people have lived and thought through time. Any modern city can provide a point of entry for understanding the workings of the space-economy, of urbanization as a process, and of national material cultures. At the same time, local difference is of more than parochial interest because it may reveal the specific conditions of origin for practices that spread across whole countries or even around the world: who could study the history of film without a close look at Hollywood? Local differences may provide clues to unevenness within larger geographies of capitalist development, industrialization and urbanization. Most important, they can bear witness to resistance against the whirlwinds of capitalism, imperial conquest and nation-building, and to the persistence of oblique ideas and ways of life in the face of homogenizing forces of modernization. A look at the distinctive residential landscapes of the San Francisco Bay Area can begin to capture the character of the place and its people, and can help reveal both some larger strands within the thread of American city-building and some divergences from the well-trodden path that make San Francisco unique among US cities.

The peculiarities and conformities of the Bay Area landscape are little understood even to local residents, and what they reveal about the possibilities, contradictions and deep perversities of bourgeois urbanism is little appreciated. This is less true of Los Angeles, proclaimed by some geographers as 'the capital of the 20th century', and widely touted as a paradigmatic space of modernity or postmodernity.¹ In *Los Angeles: the architecture of the four ecologies*, Rayner Banham turned around international opinion by showing the vibrancy of LA's modernist and vernacular tradition, despite the apparent shallowness of the city's landscape and life. In the 1980s geographically minded critics such as Frederick Jameson, Edward Soja and Mark Gottdeiner claimed that southern California's rampaging banality held the clues to the latest in everything *postmodern*.²

Despite the brilliance of all such readings of Californian iconography, the lay of the land can still be deceptive. The urban landscape in the San Francisco Bay Area is markedly different from that of southern California. The locals delight in certain



kinds of living spaces from which spring much of the attractiveness of the Bay Area to visitor and resident alike. Of course, the Bay metropole shares in the common attributes of American urbanization: crass commercialism, mass home-building, and rampant fringe development. Indeed, California, north and south, is where many of the key elements of twentieth-century cities were invented and perfected. It could be that Los Angeles and Las Vegas are today the vanguard, while the sleepy north has fallen behind in the race to the future. San Francisco was, after all, celebrated as the brash-est (and possibly the ugliest) city in the world in its early days. The Bay Area has hardly stagnated, however, and it is now the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States, with over 6 million inhabitants. The fringe of metropolitan expansion extends 50 to 100 miles from downtown San Francisco. Yet the texture of the urban area around the Bay has not gone the way of Los Angeles: neither modern nor post-modern, neither merely suburban nor, much less, postsuburban. It is, if anything, res-

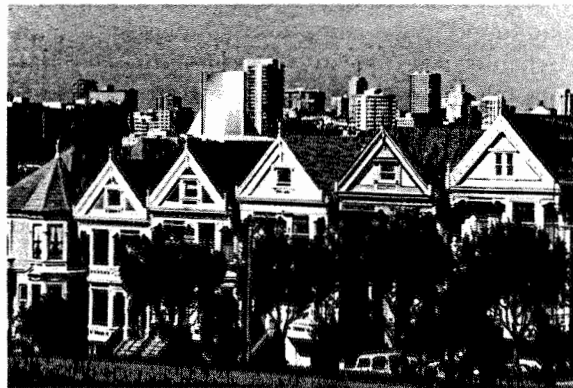
olutely anti-modern in outlook and, lacking a modernist antithesis, unable to mount much of a postmodern offensive either. It is massively suburbanized, yet its heart was never cut out, and both core and suburban areas remain distinctly urbane. Urbanity – that elusive combination of density, public life, cosmopolitan mixing, and free expression – is the key term for unlocking the Bay Area's history and geography.

Four pieces of the urban puzzle – four residential ecologies, to echo Banham – occupy much of the critical ground of the metropolis. The oldest and most famous is the nineteenth-century Victorian townhouse realm. The most recent and extensive is the vast domain of single-family homes, mass suburbia of the twentieth century. The dominant element setting the cultural tone of the Bay Area is a middle-class suburbia of a peculiar sort: the ecotopian middle landscape. The most overlooked, yet vital, realm of all is the hotel and apartment districts of San Francisco and the inner East Bay. All four ecologies have their counterparts in other American cities, but the peculiarities of their form, scale and survival in the Bay Area lends the place a special feeling and look. In three of the four realms, an urbanism born of high density and cacophonous diversity still runs rampantly in counterflow to conventional American suburbia. Nor did mass suburbanization and its plain of simple homes ever entirely break with the earlier mould of regional urbanity.

The four residential zones considered here establish the basic tone of urban life, particularly in the central realms of the metropolis, and can provide a strong foundation on which to understand geography, culture and politics in the region. This civic landscape springs from the distinctive class, political and cultural nature of the Bay Area – relatively wealthy, petty bourgeois, bohemian, cosmopolitan, labourist, environmentalist, egalitarian, anti-modern – and embodies the contradictions of the libertine capitalism that is a local trademark. We begin to glimpse this society and its politics behind the facades of the material landscape.³

Victorian order and the look of urbanity

The visual quality for which San Francisco is most famous is provided by the Victorian houses marching cheek-by-jowl up and down the city's hills, delighting the eye with decorative excess and a puckered streetscape of bay windows. The old city of San Francisco is indelibly marked by its legacy of Victorian homes, some 10,000 in



number, lying in a grand arc around the city's burnt-out core of 1906, the date when the earth shook and Victorian building came to an abrupt end. The self-conscious urbanity of the late nineteenth century is vital to San Francisco's feeling of being a true city. This effect is achieved at a scale rarely over three stories high, showing that a vigorous urbanism does not require the verticality of Manhattan.

Now regarded as quaint and

charming, the Victorian townscape came into being as a full-blown project of modernization by a newly arrived bourgeoisie seeking to impose their order upon an untamed city. The old San Francisco beloved of visitors is not an organic form of a simpler past, but was thrown up in one titanic 30-year spasm of capitalist property development that erased most of the earlier terrain of the Gold Rush city. In its early years San Francisco was a jumble of plain wooden buildings, mostly unpainted, with plain facades. The cheapness of timber and the haste of construction gave this 'instant city' the feel of a 'woodyard of unusual extent', according to Robert Louis Stevenson. As much of the little peninsula was treeless and windswept, the overall effect was closer to a mining camp than a great city. Almost no trace of that era remains, a result of intention more than accidents of time, rising land values or natural disaster.⁴

San Francisco of the 1850s and 60s was too raw, too unruly and too libertine for the burghers who amassed fortunes from mining and mercantile trade. An outshoot of American capitalism, which turned its gold and silver into specie, California was a place where young men (most of them solidly petit bourgeois) could escape from the strictures of family, propriety and property, and could revel in a rough frontier equality, a pure money economy, and an absent state – for a few short years. Add the sudden political ascendance of the despised Irish through the local Democratic party, and you have the conditions for the reactionary eruption of vigilantism in 1851 and 1855–7 (and episodically later) among the emergent Anglo bourgeoisie.⁵ Along with the Second Committee of Vigilance came the Van Ness ordinances (backed up by correlative state law) establishing city control over development and property rights. Land titles, subject to wildly conflicting squatters claims, were regularized and a class of property owners emerged from the chaos of primitive accumulation. The new burghers took the streets in another way, installing spatial order through a fully worked-out street grid and lot subdivision pattern imposed on the expanding city in its Western and Southern Additions (platted in 1861). Consolidation of the city and county of San Francisco tightened the grip over so-called outside lands, where claims were settled by 1866 and a full grid mapped onto the remaining territory by 1879.⁶ New development followed quickly at the fringe, a residential suburbia that was not yet suburban.

As the social order of the young city settled down into a conventional class structure after the silver and railroad boom of 1860–73, the bourgeoisie established visual order by installing miles of stately rowhouses on the model of London terraces. A taste of Haussmann's Paris could also be found in the sumptuous Queen Anne mansions lining broad Van Ness Avenue. Urbanity, not rusticity, was in fashion – a didactic urbanism that shouted its pretensions from every rooftop, as the *nouveaux arrivées* clung to civility in the midst of frontier conquest and raw plunder. The Victorian city was built mainly by small builder-developers buying up lots in groups of five to 50 from subdividers, and building to order or speculating on a handful of houses, but larger operators also play a part: the Real Estate Associates put up over a thousand homes in the 1870s, while Fernando Nelson topped this with over 4000 homes in the 1880s and 90s.⁷ If community developers today can package and sell an entire 'lifestyle', so could developers in the nineteenth century; Sam Bass Warner calls this the 'weave of small patterns', but understates the coherence lent the whole project by the larger framework of capitalist land development and class initiatives taken to

establish the terms of civic expansion.⁸

Victorian San Francisco came out looking like nowhere else. Partly it was the wood, in place of brick or brownstone; partly the wider lots, allowing for more semi-detached homes; partly the adaptation of styles imported without regard to origins. But mostly it was a result of wildly flamboyant taste and posturing among the *nouveaux riches* on the naked edge of the continent, who thought nothing of overdecorative facades, false fronts to simulate a loftier city, or piles of gabled impertinence. This vulgar display was on Thorstein Veblen's mind when he wrote *The theory of the leisure class* while teaching at Stanford University at the end of the century. San Francisco was literally the Las Vegas of its time, from its gambling to its vernacular excesses, and a place to learn from.⁹

The Victorian city shows that historicism and eclecticism are nothing new in the urban landscape, and that postmodernism is the latest variation on a old theme. Victorian architecture was not one style, but a hodgepodge of historic references to Gothic, Italian, Dutch, Egyptian and Arab pasts, which home-buyers dipped into as suited their taste. Houses of that time are nothing if not a playful pastiche of decorative bric-a-brac. Streetfront variation came from personalized facades, oddities of lot sizes, and the small scale of building; a vigorous degree of freedom was possible within an otherwise rigid system of building. Victorian houses are all surface, however: the house is a simple upright box onto which are pasted all the gewgaws the buyer wished. These were thoroughly modern, mass-production houses, built with standard floor plans, industrially cut wood, standard balloon-frames, pattern-book blueprints, and machine-turned pieces selected from catalogues.¹⁰

To confuse Bauhaus and international style with the fever of modernity is to conflate architectural style with the substance of bourgeois modernization. High modernism is the exception in American cities, confined to utilitarian commercial landscapes and little adopted for single-family homes. The bourgeoisie have found solace in fussy parlours, bogus historicism and preposterous exteriors – notwithstanding important modern improvements in surface materials, floor plans, utilities, and hygienic kitchens and baths. Residential reverie has long rubbed against the grain of utilitarianism in street grids and dollars per front-foot. Postmodernism is just the revenge of suburbia on the downtown.

Here and there around the rim of the bay are to be found patches of Victorian buildings in an undulating sea of twentieth-century housing, at old town centres such as San Jose, Oakland or Petaluma. These evoke memory of small towns in the Midwest. San Francisco's burghers also built a handful of suburban Victorian homes in emulation of Palladian (or Georgian) villas, surrounded by orchards and exotic imports. Most are gone now, and incongruous stands of palm, dracena and monkey-puzzle trees bear mute witness to estates long since demolished for housing tracts. (Hence Gertrude Stein's lament, 'There is no there, there', on seeing her lost childhood home in Oakland.) Victorian styles went out of fashion by the depression of the 1890s, and were replaced by neo-classical boxes as Oakland and Berkeley became the fastest growing parts of the Bay Area. Rows of boxes fronted all the new trolley car lines in the East Bay, trying to keep intact the stolid form of urbanity established in the Victorian era despite wide lots that allowed for broader, detached homes. But they were overmatched by new forms of suburban housing within a few years.

The Victorian city put so determinedly into place by the local bourgeoisie soon revealed its limitations as a solution to social and natural order. First, the working class swelled as the city grew, attracted by jobs in construction, manufacturing and longshoring, bringing hordes of immigrants from Ireland, China, Italy and Germany. The zone south of Market Street filled to bursting with a warren of workers' habitations, spilling over into the Mission and Potrero Hill districts to the south. Labour agitation and politics took the city by storm in the 1870s and again at the turn of the century, with the Union Labor Party taking power for most of the next 20 years. Second, it turned out to be difficult to hold the high ground against creeping industrialization, and the general intrusion of denser housing and commerce into residential areas. Finally, the raging fires of 1906 consumed the stately Victorians as readily as the fires of the 1850s had devoured the untamed woodpile of their day. Transforming whole forests into dense stands of two-by-fours only relocated the natural hazards of conflagration. These contradictions laid the basis for new forms of suburban housing that gained the upper hand in the twentieth century.

Yet the wealthy never abandoned San Francisco, as they did so many American core cities, and still cling to the northern ridges (Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights) overlooking the Golden Gate. In emulation of the European aristocracy, they seek relief in retreats to country homes and mountain resorts. The seasonal migration back to the city for the opera and other delights is still as regular as the passage of sparrows.¹¹

Although past, the Victorian era continued to set the tone for San Francisco's streetscapes. The grid and lot pattern held firm, with larger replacement buildings occupying multiples of 25- and 30-foot lots, still fronting the street, until the age of urban renewal (when whole blocks became the units of design). The basic lines of the Victorian facade (high and narrow, window and entry elements, jutting bay windows) remained a mainstay of house design. As neo-classical, Mediterranean, shingle and Bauhaus styles came along, they adapted to the Victorian habit, even as interiors were updated and ground-level garages became the norm. High modernism had little room to stretch its wings in San Francisco, unlike in Banham's Los Angeles.

In the past 20 years, Victorian houses have come back into fashion with a vengeance, as part of the remaking of San Francisco and the inner East Bay. Wherever gentrification takes place, Victorian houses are the first to be targeted. A bright coat of paint can bring a realtor a quick sale or a landlord a higher rent, while a strong dose of sweat-equity can reward an enterprising young homeowner with a sense of luxurious spaciousness and crafted interiors that she could not otherwise afford. In the central districts of San Francisco, Berkeley and north Oakland, one finds some of the most thorough-going gentrification of old housing and commercial strips in the country. Gentrification has also moved into the nearby working-class areas of the East and West Bays.¹²

The attraction of Victorian houses is very much wrapped up with their evocation of nineteenth-century urban vitality and exuberance, not simply a nostalgia for the past. Gentrification was closely associated with the yuppie wave of the 1970s and 80s, and its conscientious striving after an urban culture in the European manner.¹³ The roaring success of yuppie culture renewed for another generation the long tradition of urbanity among San Francisco's middle and upper classes. The taste for Victorians was born of a confrontation not so much with modernist aesthetics, as with the dis-

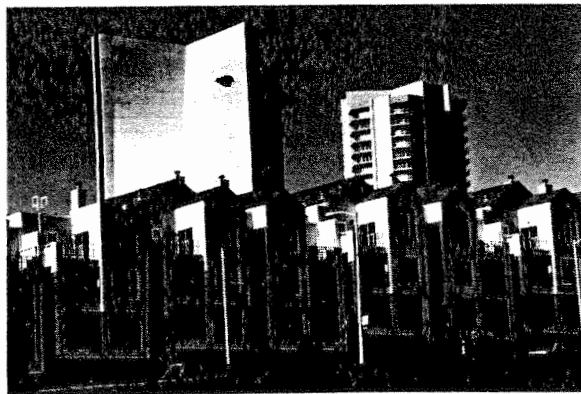
taste for the modern wrecking ball and the levelling of large parts of the city by urban renewal projects and freeways in the 1950s and 60s. A campaign to save the antiquated cable cars began in the 1940s, and the battle against the freeways was joined by the late 1950s. San Francisco became the first American city to stop freeway construction, leaving the notorious Embarcadero Freeway literally hanging in mid-air over the waterfront for 30 years.

In this environment of civic rebellion, the historic preservation movement was born. Pictorial essays touting the splendours of Victorian homes and old skyscrapers cultivated a taste for the past, and a Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage was formed in 1971. Local magazines began running articles on rehabbing old homes, and salvage businesses sprang up to save the best bits and pieces of demolished old buildings. The major axes of contention were the Western Addition in San Francisco and west Oakland; and while both districts lost upwards of half their remaining structures to urban clear-cutting, vocal citizens groups saved a great many. These alliances made for strange bedfellows, with the Junior League of San Francisco (women from the best families) working hand-in-hand with gay activists (key to the reshaping of architectural taste and rehabilitation of old houses) and alongside African-American neighbourhood groups (fighting against a thoroughly racist Black removal strategy of the civic élites). As a consequence, the political significance was a great deal more radical than one would imagine from the generalization of a commercial 'heritage industry' throughout Europe and North America in the 1980s.¹⁴

A further contradiction of the preservation and gentrification movements is that they assisted in the annihilation of working-class urban culture, pricing most workers out of the urban core. Obscure little South Park (near the foot of the Bay Bridge), once a refuge for a small black residential block, is now a popular eating spot for the denizens of Virtual Valley, the new hot spot for multimedia electronics and computer magazine publishers. As always, financiers and land owners grew rich on the unearned increment between the price of working-class neighbourhoods and the prices high-income people will pay for their taste of urbanism. The ultimate irony is the reappearance of Victorian-style townhouses in the Western Addition, where exposed gaps of land have stood barren for almost 40 years after the removal of thousands of poor people's homes by the bulldozers.

Victoriana has come back to the suburbs, as well. Today's postmodern designers

play the trick of pirating the city for the images of an urbane suburbia. Half-circle window lights, a suggestion of verticality, and meaningless dormers sprout like mung beans in the tracts of the 1980s. Neo-Victorians give the buyer a taste of old San Francisco in faceless places like Hercules, Milpitas or Walnut Creek. This is, in part, a degenerate postmodernism – the contented marriage of mass production with prim pilasters



and fenestration – and another small indicator of the degeneration of urbanity in America. Yet it is also a sign of urbanity attempting, against all the odds, to be reborn in the 'edge cities' of the late twentieth century, searching for a history that ties its bloodline to the urbanism of the past.

The ecotopian middle landscape

By the turn of the century, Bay Area architecture and suburban design broke with the consciously urbane style of San Francisco. As a result, the region is blessed with a distinctive type of residential ecology, the ecotopian middle landscape. The mock cabin, craftsman styling and the brown shingle are this landscape's characteristic way of building; its homes are tucked into hillsides along narrow, winding streets that echo the terrain; and the interstices are heavily wooded with native oak, redwood and chaparral, as well as eucalyptus, plum, deodar and a profusion of imports. Romantic and naturalist in inspiration, the look of these bohemian groves is artfully unkempt: a semi-wild vision of a city in the woodlands and woodlands in the city.

The ecotopian suburbs are where large numbers of the Bay Area's abundant stock of professionals, technicians and managers, as well as many of the owning class, make their abode. It is the archtypal landscape of a libertarian, bohemian middle class who lend a special social flavour to local society, and has sequestered many an arcane social practice and political thought over the years – from Isadora Duncan's modern dance to Gary Snyder's zen environmentalism. It has been projected onto the whole of the Pacific Northwest as *Ecotopia* by Berkeley's Ernest Callenbach, and by Joel Garreau in his *Nine nations of North America*, held up as the last redoubt of a populist vision of the American middle class as the bearers of a moral order equally opposed to capitalist and communist savagery.¹⁵ The ecotopian middle landscape is thus a curious variant of the bourgeois Utopias that dominate suburban form across the United States. The look is neither English garden nor crabgrass frontier, having been modified by California's climate, physiography and materials, as well as by conscious design. Nor is the Utopian vision that of the upright bourgeois conservative; in its fierce environmentalism and quasi-religious idealism it is more akin to Wilberforce's London Evangelicals than to Reagan's New Republican Majority.¹⁶ All the same, the Bay Area's bohemian enclaves partake of many of the same illusions as all suburban hideaways.



The leading example of the bohemian forest suburb is north Berkeley, but the same social ecotone stretches for miles along the East Bay hills. It even makes unexpected appearances in San Francisco (at Russian Hill and on the flank of Twin Peaks). These are all thought of as 'central city' areas in the metropolitan scheme of things today, yet they were once on the suburban fringe. Ecotopian suburbs are abundant north of the Golden

Gate in Marin County and run down the hilly spine of the San Francisco Peninsula all the way to Silicon Valley. And they are presently advancing along a broad front in the arcadian North Bay of Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino counties. While some of the wealthier areas in this zone are the territory of big estates of the *haute bourgeoisie* (Hillsborough, Ross, Saratoga), grand mansions are not the central element of ecotopia.

The Bay Area's bohemian suburbs were born in the heady days around the turn of the century, when a fever of civic rebirth overtook the region. As the mining era wound down, the city was due for a transformation in every domain, including urban form. A wave of growth after the depression of the 1890s continued without pause to the First World War: building activity was ferocious, skyscrapers shot up, and the city prospered mightily. Wages rose and grand schemes for urban renewal were concocted for San Francisco, while a vast new push took the city outward. Faster transport by electric trolley, gasoline-driven ferries, and early automobiles helped propel the outward march of residential suburbs, as did the dispersal of industry and commerce into the East Bay. The earthquake and fire of 1906 accelerated a diaspora already underway.

The suburban revolution was as much a class project as the Victorian landscape had been, led this time by a prosperous new generation of businessmen and their families, joined by an expanding middle class of doctors, professors and insurance executives – most of whom were fresh out of the new universities at Berkeley and Stanford. The design problem facing developers, architects and engineers was to carve out spaces appropriate to the sensibilities of a more sophisticated élite of capitalists, high-paid staff and credentialed intellectuals. This class project cut right across the United States at the time, but took a special twist in the Bay Area with its peculiar landscape ideas, architectural innovations and community politics. Three conditions had to be satisfied in this ecotopian quest: a sylvan landscape, artful homes, and thoughtful community planning.

The first element of the new suburban form was the treatment of natural landscape. In California, the English garden ideal gave way to the romance of the wilds and a love affair with the aesthetics of a Mediterranean land. The conservationist urge was at a high pitch due to general repugnance at the untrammelled brutality visited on the state by mining, lumbering and environmental plunder over the previous half-century. To this was joined a more genteel goal of bringing Nature under the wing of civilized pursuits, such as hiking, outdoorsmanship, and taking the waters at hot springs. Naturalism was a coat of many colours made up of both the dissipated revels of the Bohemian Club and the ascetic creed of John Muir. But its participants shared a certain mystical religiosity – part transcendental, part masonic, part romantic – about Nature and art, with the Big Trees and Yosemite Valley as universal icons. Their goal was to marry the resort to city life, and to enjoy a cultivated rusticity in both the land and themselves.¹⁷

Unlike the English or Philadelphia mainliners, the California burghers could not call upon a settled countryside of well-peopled farms to inspire their Arcadia; they had to go straight to the woods – all the more so because San Francisco was so barren.¹⁸ The best places were tiny pockets of second-growth redwoods; lacking this, bay laurel and oak woodlands would do. But since most of the hills were grasslands, the new suburbanites started planting trees and shrubs with a vengeance, transforming

open vistas into the thicket of greenery which today strikes the eye (large developers also planted thousands of pine and eucalyptus). Today's residents are surprised by old photographs showing barren hills behind Berkeley and other bohemian retreats, disbelieving that theirs is a cultivated rusticity in such a literal sense.

The second element of the rustic suburbs was house style, and so into the urban woodlands came the architects to build homes for well-to-do patrons. A burst of professional creativity took place in the Bay Area with the arrival of a handful of exceptional talents in the 1890s: Willis Polk, A. C. Schweinfurth, A. Page Brown, Ernest Coxhead and Bernard Maybeck (joined after 1900 by Julia Morgan and John Galen Howard). This brilliant circle was a part of the new wave of architecture coming out of Paris, the new schools of professional design in the US, and the New York firm of McKim, Mead and White. The new wave rejected the falsity and incoherence of Victorian architecture in favour of a studied simplicity and integrity of design, harkening back to classical forms of Rome and Italy and vernacular styles from England, France and Colonial America, and they were fascinated by the possibilities of the local terrain.¹⁹

The new architecture was eclectic here, as elsewhere: Polk could design everything from Renaissance office buildings to Appalachian hunting lodges; Maybeck could produce a Beaux Arts Palace of Fine Arts as easily as Swiss chalets; Julia Morgan would do any style – in the case of William Randolph Hearst's egomaniacal San Simeon, all of them at once. This jumble became characteristic of twentieth-century American suburbia, embracing half-timber, turrets and moorish arches alike in a magical mystery tour of half-baked world history domesticated for middle-class consumption. The *haute bourgeois* version of this is to be found in elegant Pacific Heights and country manor homes, but the bohemian woodlands, too, absorbed all styles and shapes. While it is moot whether the Bay Area group can lay claim to any unique style, they came up with two distinctive contributions: the rustic cottage and Mission revival.²⁰

The rustic cottage took its studied simplicity from the English cottage movement, its shingled walls and plain interiors from New England, and married both to the mountain cabin and the Italian village.²¹ Clinging to the region's hillsides, the rustic house could be unassuming and still offer the occupant the grandeur of the view over the bay. (The split-level house evolved easily here, as did the picture window and open-air deck.) Wood construction allowed a 'freer arrangement of space and mass on a low budget than was possible with masonry'.²² Unvarnished redwood came back into fashion, along with the Arts and Crafts aesthetics of Ruskin and Morris, and the influences of Japanese craftwork. Berkeley's intellectuals occupied hundreds of brown-shingle homes designed by Maybeck and his followers, and Maybeck became the sage and inspiration to the bohemian community living on what local businessmen called 'Nut Hill' north of the University campus.²³

The Mission style grew out of the 1880s rediscovery of Old California, a world so fully obliterated by the 49ers that it could be safely romanticized by the Daughters of the Pioneers. It originated in the Bay Area, particularly the stunning quadrangle complex of Stanford University and Brown and Schweinfurth's California Hall for the Chicago World's Fair, but was more appropriate to the sun-bleached climes of southern California where the myth of the Californios had more purchase. In this it was the reverse of the shingle style, where Greene and Greene of Pasadena were the

greatest practitioners but which was more widely adopted in northern California.²⁴ The Mission style was part of a broader borrowing from Mediterranean prototypes to construct a distinctive California landscape and culture, and for all the myth-making involved, this effort left a most agreeable legacy of domestic architecture throughout the state.²⁵

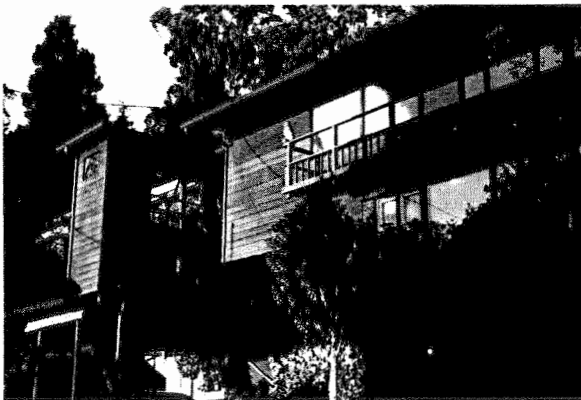
Modern architecture, by contrast, had little impact on the Bay Area and its bohemian hideaways, despite such early modernist impulses as simple lines, the use of concrete, exposure of functional structure, and use of industrial windows, especially by Maybeck. Prairie style and international style houses mingle freely with redwood cottages, and are softened, in most cases, by redwood plank siding. In the 1930s, William Wurster and John Cooper Funk married modernism to the Bay Area tradition of wood finish and respect for the landscape. Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn and LA's R. M. Schindler and Richard Neutra all adapted to the regional predilection for wood and naturalized landscaping in their Bay Area homes.²⁶

The third element in the ecotopian constellation has been a strong planning ideal embodied in suburban enclaves of the middle and upper classes. Here, too, originality is not so much at issue as the enthusiasm of key developers and the sustained involvement of the residents in community planning. Early precedents for Romantic suburbs go back to the mid-nineteenth century in the US: Andrew Jackson Downing's sketches, Alexander Jackson Davis' Llewelyn Park (1857), and Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Riverside (1869) set the precedent for the contoured lines of the unified subdivision, in place of the ubiquitous American grid. Natural topography, creeks and woodlands were all carefully preserved in the naturalistic plans of the Romantic suburb.²⁷ But the generalization of planned suburban developments only came in the 1890s, led by F. L. Olmsted Jr's Roland Park (1891).

To be realized, the romantic suburb required a large scale of operations and a separation of residential areas from commercial and industrial land uses. A new breed of developers worked up a large parcel of outlying land into a prescribed living environment (a far cry from the indiscriminate selling of individual lots in a plat of the nineteenth century). Control of house and yard standards and exclusion of discordant uses was secured first through deed restrictions, and then through zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. Utilities such as electricity, telephones and gas became a normal feature of the 'improved' subdivision. Houses were constructed in close asso-

ciation with the opening up, section by section, of the planned district, while allied real estate companies promoted the homes and the idyllic way of life. In all this, private initiative usually preceded government planning.²⁸

The first such planned enclaves in the Bay Area were laid out from 1889-95 by Michael O'Shaughnessy in Marin County (Mill Valley and Belvedere) and on the Peninsula (Hillsborough). The East Bay's first such private



development did not come until after 1900, in Berkeley (the Claremont, Cragmont and Northbrae districts) by realtor Duncan McDuffie and in Oakland (at Trestle Glen, Park View, and other projects of the giant Realty Syndicate). McDuffie also built idyllic St Francis Wood on the western flank of Twin Peaks in 1912.²⁹ Community planning in Berkeley became, characteristically, a social movement, where a group of faculty wives organized the Hillside Club in 1896 in order to force the city to adopt enlightened design principles (after Cedar Street was rammed straight up the hill). They turned north Berkeley into a warren of sinuous, narrow streets joined to the main trolley thoroughfares by steps and paths, as well as leading the effort to create a huge greenbelt park in the Berkeley hills.³⁰ Cultivated rusticity also triumphed over beaux-arts neo-classicism of the sort embodied in an 1895 plan to make the University campus into a 'City of Learning' and Berkeley into the Athens of the West – an idea dreamed up, ironically enough, by the fertile imagination of the young Maybeck.³¹

Indeed, California led the nation in real estate regulation. The first exclusionary zoning laws in the country were adopted in the 1880s by Modesto and San Francisco to rid Anglo zones of Chinese. Every integrated development came with racial covenants and other deed restrictions from the 1890s onward. Subdivision maps were first required in California in 1893 and the regulations upgraded again in 1907, 1915 and in the 1920s. Los Angeles introduced the first comprehensive zoning act in 1908 (upgraded in 1915). Berkeley's McDuffie came up with the idea of single-use and large-lot zoning to confine commercial activities to designated areas and restrain further subdivision of exclusive domains – which became the norm throughout the United States after 1915. Berkeley also put into effect a sophisticated zoning ordinance to protect factory owners from complaints by working-class neighbours.³²

Ecotopia got its first rude shock with the north Berkeley fire of 1923. Shingle-style wooden houses lost favour after 600 of them were swept away in a single autumn day. Community power and design with nature suffered another blow when the aesthetics of football triumphed at the University and a huge stadium was jammed into scenic Strawberry Canyon. The brief efflorescence of bohemian experimentation tailed off through the 1920s. Nevertheless, the ambience of cultivated rusticity lives on to charm generations of new arrivals looking for a middle-class sanctuary that is neither too well ordered nor too far from the city streets.

The ecotopian landscape did not die out as a money-making model of suburbanization, however. Rustic ranch-style homes of the 1940s and 50s continued to be tucked into the hillsides, canyons and oak woodlands as the leading edge of urban expansion moved to the southern Peninsula, up Marin's central corridor, or beyond the Berkeley Hills.³³ In the 1960s, community activism and design with nature were renewed with a vengeance, and the rustic Bay style made a comeback with the help of Berkeley's Joe Esherick and LA's Charles Moore, whose design for the seaside cabins of Sea Ranch up the Mendocino Coast harkened back to Maybeck and Wurster's board-and-batten work. When the University of California expanded to Santa Cruz, the motif was a bohemian retreat in the redwoods. Silicon Valley millionaires today buy into cosy ecotopias along the western foothills, from Los Gatos to Woodside, with the same ease as rich stockbrokers rubbed elbows with Maybeck's minions in Berkeley. Los Angeles, by comparison, left Pasadena's Arroyo culture behind and went on to become a world centre of modernism to which San Francisco was generally

unreceptive; LA remained a more *laissez-faire* city, whose charm of the 1920s and arts and crafts counterculture were all but expunged, while the Bay Area poked along, nursing its delights, holding developers to a higher standard, and cultivating bohemian fantasies.³⁴

This idyllic vision was again shattered by the firestorm of October 1991. In a matter of hours, a raging inferno whipped up by desiccating, easterly winds consumed over 3000 homes in Oakland and Berkeley. Losses totalled more than \$1.5 billion, making it the costliest urban fire in the United States since 1906. The following day revealed a moonscape of devastation. Chimneys and blackened tree trunks stood in mute testimony to the passing inferno, where oven-like temperatures had melted cars and girders into twisted relief. Most residents lost everything. No one was prepared for such a holocaust, because few recognized the hillsides and canyons for what they were: an urban forest. This was nothing less than a forest fire in the middle of a city, and forest fires burn with an intensity and at a scale unimaginable in urban terms. If San Francisco is 'the city that waits to die', the ecotopian suburbs are no less a death-trap when the Diablo winds funnel out of the hot interior, and humidity plummets from coastal to desert conditions in a few hours. Suddenly, a felicitous accommodation between city and country turns out to be a bald affront to natural hazards and good sense. Urbane anti-urbanism proves, in the end, not to be the best of both worlds, city and woodland, but possibly the worst. As in San Francisco in 1906, property owners were adamant about proceeding without restraint. Rebuilding in the fire zone is nearing completion today, with few changes in roads, utilities or building standards.³⁵

Rebuilding has revealed another unanticipated threat to the ecotopian way of life: monster houses. Land in the heart of a large and wealthy metropolis has a market value much greater than one would suspect from the small cottages once in vogue. Middle-class incomes have surged, putting \$0.5 million houses within range of many. While the first houses rebuilt tended to replicate beloved lost homes, many burghers have thought to expand their enclosed spaces in keeping with the usual American spatial exuberance: average floorspace has jumped up to 2800 square feet, billious houses covering up most of their modest lots. An architectural review team likened the effect to traincars perched on the hillside, and decried clumsy designs and the loss of open terrain and spirit of unity. Styles have also changed with the times, favouring hulking, tasteless and cheap Mission Redux, power plinths of the 1980s coming to taunt bohemia's declensions. The unchecked market is in revolt against the planning idea and the Reagan generation appears to have little use for the fuzzy virtues of ecotopian romantics.

Multiple meanings: invisible homes, visible publics, derisible lives

A thoroughly neglected residential type in American cities are multiple-unit buildings serving as hotels, apartments, flats and rooming houses. Multiples allow the highest density of dwelling and serve as housing for single people, people on the move, the young, the elderly, those of modest means, and non-conforming families. Cutting against the grain of American bourgeois ideals of home, propriety and familialism, they have been the outcasts of urban housing, denied even the name of 'home' fit

and proper, cordoned off from single-family zones of residence, and targetted for demolition in vast numbers. The multiples and their accompanying way of life have not been an upper-class project in the same way as Victorian and suburban homes, and have suffered for their transgressions, yet apartment and hotel districts constitute perhaps the most vital ecology in the urban landscape, and give the inner Bay Area its continuing sense of urbanity.³⁶

San Francisco still has 56 per cent of its housing units in apartments and flats and 17 per cent in hotel rooms.³⁷ The city's reputation as a vital and attractive place rests heavily on its apartment and hotel districts, which fill up the whole of its northeast quadrant (coating the flanks of Nob, Russian and Telegraph hills from the Van Ness corridor east and Market Street north, as well as several blocks south of Market). This is all that most tourists ever see, the charming city of cable cars, street life and public entertainment. Here the building stock consists overwhelmingly of three- to six-storied buildings. Just north of Market, the Tenderloin boasts the largest concentration of hotels, including both luxury tourist and a multitude of long-term residential hotels, many cheap single-room occupancy lodgings. Other tourist clusters can be found downtown and near Fisherman's Wharf, and Chinatown is packed with residential hotels. Residential hotels make up 40 per cent of the city's 600-plus hotels and almost 50,000 hotel rooms.

San Francisco has always been a city of transients, tourists and tenants, more so than any other American city.³⁸ South of Market and the Western Addition used to count scores of working-class rooming houses, but most were not rebuilt after the fire or have been torn down. Out in the Victorian neighbourhoods lying just outside the fire line (the Western Addition, Hayes Valley and the Haight-Ashbury) most large old homes were rapidly subdivided into flats soon afterward. The northeast core of hotels and apartments was rebuilt virtually as a piece after 1906, far more densely than it had been before. So many multiples were built at this time that the foldaway bed came to be named after San Francisco's Murphy company. Meant expressly for multiple-unit housing, these buildings incorporated the latest standards in construction, utilities and layout. Good apartments offered a scaled-down version of the modern house, complete with 'kitchenette' and full private bathroom. The smaller buildings on the northern flank of the hills are wood (often stuccoed), while the larger ones on the southern flank of Nob Hill are usually brick. Stylistically, many of the smaller

buildings appear to be stripped-down Victorians, thanks to retention of the ubiquitous bay window.

Outside San Francisco areas of multiple homes are to be found, as well. Downtown Oakland was once rich in hotels, few of which survive. Apartment buildings have fared better, and still rim Lake Merritt and the surrounding hillsides. Berkeley's student population always supported a large number of lodg-



ing houses and hotels, especially around Telegraph Avenue, but the town became much denser in the war and postwar era when old houses were broken up into apartments, rented out as group homes, or torn down by the hundreds for in-fill apartment buildings. Every major automobile corridor in the region (such as the El Camino and Bayshore Freeway corridors on the Peninsula) is blessed with legions of old California motels from the 1920s to 50s and slap-up apartments of the 1950s to 70s. Silicon Valley is bursting with apartment buildings along its industrial arteries, though little remains of San Jose's downtown residential hotels after thoroughgoing urban renewal. And today new nodes of residential density are popping up in response to rising land values, the squeeze on incomes, and new-found prosperity around some retail centres (such as old downtown Mountain View in Silicon Valley or the Highway 680 hub of Walnut Creek in the East Bay).

Residential hotels and apartments burst on the Bay Area scene in the 1890s. Most rentals before that time were rooming and boarding houses, often the homes of workers and widows. Up to the end of the 1920s, multiples became a major outlet for property investors operating around the cores of large cities (George Smith and Edward Rolkin made millions on hotels, luxury and flophouse, respectively). Construction of multiple dwellings occurred as part of a general concentration of people, employment and capital in urban centres of the time. This was not a simple continuation of the nineteenth-century city, but the high tide of urban concentration. Downtown was less densely populated earlier in the nineteenth century and became so again later in the twentieth century. The dense central city was no more the natural order of capitalist cities than present-day sprawl. Its apotheosis was the product of at least four things: the splitting off of corporate offices and the building of skyscrapers; the radial trolley systems focusing large commuting fields; big department stores concentrating retailing; and mass immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe fuelling garment factories, workshops, cheap hotels and overcrowded tenements. Under such circumstances capitalism was congruent with dense urbanism.

Hotels led the way, with apartment buildings overtaking them by the First World War; in the 1920s apartments passed up single-family homes as well. These were often of very high quality, with names such as The Normandy, as developers jockeyed for respect with single-family dwellings. After the collapse of 1929, the residential hotel



market revived during the Second World War, then dried up. Apartment building did not enjoy another burst until the 1960s, when their numbers again caught up with single-family homes (in California apartments peaked in 1963, six years earlier than the rest of the country). A glut of single-family homes and growing legions of students and young people striking out on their own tilted demand towards low-priced apartments; tax breaks

accelerated the trend. LA-style 'dingbats' became the rage – drab slabs on sticks with garages underneath, thin walls, poor heating, and doors opening directly onto outside breezeways. Thus, in each of the long waves of growth in this century, stand-alone houses did best in the early years, only to be overtaken by apartments. Shrinkage of house size also accompanied this squeeze on single-family dwellings, as did feverish efforts to rationalize house building and the layout of large-scale developments; total housing starts fell off by the 1920s and 1960s, as well.³⁹ Investment in multiples came in waves that were sharper and shorter than upturns in the construction of single-family houses. In both long waves, long term overaccumulation and falling rates of profit afflicted the property sector, as well as the whole economy.⁴⁰

Hotel and apartment districts are notable for the urban life they support. When one's house is small, as Paul Groth has observed, home life stretches out along the street: dining in a neighbourhood eatery, reading in a coffee shop, playing in an arcade, going out to the movies. Here lies the everyday substrate for a public life in urban places, making for congregations of people, assemblages of diverse activities, and the flow of feet along the pavement. The Great White Ways such as Market, Mission, and Fillmore Streets in San Francisco – major commercial streets packed with movie palaces, retail emporia, pool halls, cafeterias and dance halls – depended heavily on the traffic from the denizens of the multiples. Mission Street, Grant Avenue, Upper Market and Columbus Avenue still bristle with vitality thanks to dense neighbourhoods of Central Americans, Chinese, gays and bohemians. For Berkeley and Oakland, Telegraph and Broadway Avenues and 7th Street, respectively, played the same role (though only Telegraph still does).

These commercial zones of dense housing, cheap entertainment and public life have served as the great free spaces of the city, the key nodes of urbanism in the sense of promiscuous mingling of diverse people, activities and ideas. They provide the moving panorama enjoyed by Baudelaire's *flâneur*, the porous spaces in which flourish the experimental lives of the bohemians, or their more recent equivalents, beatniks, jazzmen, hippies, gays, punks; and the gathering spots for political rebels and public intellectuals.⁴¹ San Francisco has been particularly rich in such public spaces, and that cannot be separated from its vibrancy, attractiveness, and repeated use as a launching pad for social experimentation.

The most populous inner-city districts waxed fat after 1880 on a multitude of workers drawn from two broad classifications: white-collar workers such as travelling salesmen, clericals in offices and sales women in shops and department stores, and migrant and itinerant workers such as sailors, dockers, construction tradesmen, day labourers and harvest workers. San Francisco, as a burgeoning business centre and retail emporium, employed thousands of low-end white-collar workers, including a large number of women. The city was also the central labour depot for the extractive industries of the entire west and the Pacific trade routes well into the twentieth century; huge numbers of transient workers returned year after year to the same cheap hotels and friendly environs of the streets.⁴²

Such concentrations of working people have always posed a threat to bourgeois tranquility. A restless working class can periodically erupt in riots, as in the 1870s anti-Chinese mobs, or support opposition politics, as in the Union Labor Party victories in the 1900s, or gather itself into organized opposition, as in the General Strike of 1934. Just as insidious was the style of living enjoyed by the young, single, footloose, homo-

sexual, or promiscuous – in short, all those who do not fit the nuclear family norm. In 1910, San Francisco had 25 per cent of its people living in non-family residences, far more than in New York or Chicago.⁴³ To such people, many of whom are in open flight from oppressive family, patriarchy, rural and suburban life, the city offers, ironically, greater privacy, tolerance, and the freedom of public anonymity, whether a sexually liberated youth culture or a commercialized landscape of personal desire. The downtown districts allowed young women, in particular, a measure of liberation they could not find elsewhere; one could even find abortion clinics in early hotels.⁴⁴ On the darker side, droves of single men fed an undercurrent of vice associated with alcohol, gambling and prostitution.

Dense urban life flew in the face of the conservative cult of family values that has been a guiding beacon of American politics from the Jacksonian era to the Reagan age, resulting in ritual condemnations by the guardians of order of the evils of hobos and vagrants, the dangerous classes, the Barbary Coast and Skid Row, the rowdy commercial thoroughfares. A moral and political counteroffensive began as soon as the hotel and apartment districts went up at the turn of the century, reaching a fever pitch by the flapper era of the 1920s.⁴⁵ Although Settlement House workers were sympathetic to the plight of the working poor, Progressive era reformers mostly railed against the sins of density and urban popular culture. The discourse of planning is replete with terms of censure for areas of forbidden housing: 'urban blight' where single-family homes had been turned into rental housing, 'the slum' for working class and immigrant neighbourhoods, 'zone of transition' for the hotel and apartment districts, and 'congestion' as the central ill of the teeming city.⁴⁶ The pioneer urban sociologists came to the task blinkered by small-town ideas of sociability that mistook urban anonymity and energy with alienation and psychological disorders. Decongestion, the single-family home, and suburban spaces became the mantra of twentieth-century bourgeois ideology towards the city. Activists like San Francisco's Simon Lubin could not hold back the flood of multiple-unit buildings going up, as yet, but they could throw a *cordon sanitaire* around the downtown to protect the outer regions of single-family homes. Nonetheless, the moral discourse of family, home and suburban life proved to be a great resource in taming capitalism's taste for cities.⁴⁷

The Great Depression dealt a body blow to downtowns built around great department stores, streetcars, pedestrian throngs and hotel districts. Investment dried up for the multiples, the movie palaces, the trolley lines and the rest, all of which had been vastly overcapitalized in the excesses of the 1920s. Manufacturing was devastated by the crisis, and when it revived after the war, new plants opened up far out in the metropolitan periphery, often in entirely new lines of business such as electronics. At the same time, changing labour processes and labour markets reduced the number of migratory labourers in construction, agriculture, forestry, and on the docks. These employment patterns robbed the cheap hotel districts of most of their young, leaving a residue of old men and women, and the mentally infirm, which further lowered the social standing of marginal residential zones.⁴⁸ Jobs remaining in the city often became more stable and well-paid, thanks to the growth of unionism after 1935, and this gave the industrial working class unprecedented buying power to expend on new and better houses. Federal housing and tax policies were put into place in the New Deal that confirmed home ownership and the single-family home as a national goal. Women, meanwhile, were sent back to the kitchen and the nursery

after the war. The suburbs were positioned to sweep away all competition. Tracts triumphed over transience.⁴⁹

The postwar era engendered a mad rush away from the central city, as home seekers found bargains for the asking and capital found profits for the plucking, and financiers greased the wheels of suburbanization with the backing of the Federal government. The Second World War brought a flood of workers into Bay Area and extended the life of the old, vibrant city; but it also added more Blacks and anti-Asian sentiment to the racist boiler, turning up the moral pressure against the promiscuity of human intercourse in the urban setting. So the reformers redoubled their efforts to cleanse the city of its slums and to yolk the working classes to home and hearth. Just as the American ruling class declared permanent Cold War on communism it unleashed a war of attrition on the cities of the United States, a war on urbanity, on the poor, on the working class. No explanation in terms of economic forces alone can capture the forces assembled behind suburbanization and against the survival of the central cities in this country. A class project was launched to undo an epoch of city-building and impose a different moral and spatial order – just as was done at the dawn of the Victorian and Ecotopian eras – and those whose plans did not fit this mould would feel the brunt of class power as surely as the victims of the Committees of Vigilance.

The assault on the old downtowns was planned in the 1940s and begun in earnest after 1950. The bulldozers were unleashed with military efficiency on the city's weakest constituencies. Down came the old waterfront dives. Down came Skid Row. Down came half of West Oakland. Down came the Western Addition, after Geary Boulevard and freeway onramps cut it into pieces. Up went the concrete traffic jetties over the uncharted sea of working-class San Francisco and Oakland. Down came Market Street's Fox Theater, grandest of all movie palaces. Down went BART into the bowels of the earth, leaving retailers gasping for customers. Down came the tawdry signs of the Path of Gold, and up went proper brick benches and street trees. Down came the heart of Fillmore Street.⁵⁰ This was modernism at its most destructive. It was high-handed, totalizing in vision, and delighted by the summary execution of the past. But was it rationalist or enlightened? Quite the contrary, it was based on almost total ignorance of the city and its people, moral zealotry of the kind associated with religious fanatics, and reactionary opposition to the liberatory tendencies in the capitalist city. The bourgeoisie, trying to prove that capitalism and the city were not synonymous, dismantled the downtown to save its soul.⁵¹

Miraculously, San Francisco survived the onslaught, thanks largely to the massive, crossclass protest movement against demolition and freeways. Russian Hill élites fighting the Embarcadero freeway joined forces with poor old men south of Market whose hotels were being razed. Chinatown never fell to the wrecker's ball. North Beach provided a home for the beats, and held off the advancing wall of downtown highrises (even though the Montgomery Block, bastion of the old bohemians, fell, as did the International Hotel, home of the Hungry i, beats like Lawrence Ferlinghetti were there to protest). Bill Graham made the old Fillmore Auditorium into the west coast home of rock and roll. The hippies took over the derelict Haight, after the Panhandle freeway was stopped, and dead heads still abound there. Most Tenderloin hotels still stand, thanks to rent and conversion control, and are now home to a thriving community from Southeast Asia. Mission Street's merchants continue to proclaim

their wares from a thousand marquees, now in Spanish. In the East Bay, Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue still gathers together the currents of young ambitions and discontents by the thousands each day. Oakland's heart was cut out by freeways and redevelopment, but the Chinatown and Lakeshore districts have revived thanks to Asian newcomers and the African-American middle class. Thus, to a surprising degree, the city of multiples lives on in the face of the arch hostility of a 'nation of homeowners'. Despite the postwar supernova of suburban growth, San Francisco and the inner Bay Area retain much of the tradition of living densely, publicly, freely – of urbanism as a way of life. This is why it feels the most European of any American city.

A city of small homes: making the mass suburban city

The largest impress on the urban landscape of the Bay Area is made by mile upon mile of single-family homes occupied by the middling classes. This is the city of small homes. Nothing especially artful catches the eye in these vast domains of domesticity, and decent poverty hides its face behind the facade of modest accomplishment. This is the bedrock landscape of the metropolis, the starting and ending point for the lives of the vast majority of working people. The ecology of small, single-family homes is what most people mean by 'the suburbs' – though it is much less well studied than the romantic suburbs of the upper classes (with which it is too often confused). It has been greatly promoted by the bourgeoisie as the domain of working-class propriety and stability, but also decried as an empty wasteland. At best it appears banal, because we are so completely inured to its distinctiveness as a form of human habitation.⁵²

The realm of small homes begins in San Francisco. Some are left from the Victorian era; the Mission District is still replete with such homes. But the small home in San Francisco takes the predominant form of stucco row houses built between the wars, running block after block after treeless block in the foggy west side (the Sunset District) and zig-zagging over hill and dale across the southern half of the city and the northern Peninsula (Daly City, Pacifica and south San Francisco). The majority of San Francisco's total land area is covered by these humble dwellings, a city few tourists ever see. The East Bay flatlands are similarly carpeted with modest bungalows, eight to the acre or more. Though often tinier than San Francisco's little boxes, virtually all East Bay houses are detached, with a yard. These workers' cottages begin in west Oakland as small Victorians (with only one living floor), then shade to single storey neo-classical cottages in north Oakland, and then to craftsman-style bungalows of the 1910s and stucco eclectics of the 1920s–40s. In the ring of the metropolis built after the Second World War – the southern Peninsula, southern East Bay, western Silicon Valley and outer East Bay – are the postwar tract homes: larger ranch-style, international style and split-level houses along curvilinear streets meant to suggest the earlier romantic suburb but usually on a terrain prepared by bulldozer.

The detached, single-family house remains an icon of independence and security for most Americans, workers as well as middle class and bourgeoisie. The mass suburban landscape has been a national project that cuts across class, and has deep roots in the nation's widespread access to land, agrarian and small-town virtues, and the politics of a small-owners' republic.⁵³ Its efflorescence in the postwar era rested on the unprecedented prosperity enjoyed by workers in the high Fordist period, but it was established much earlier.⁵⁴ In California the triumph of the small city home led

the nation by the turn of the century, and the state went on to play the lead role in both the political economy and morality play of twentieth-century mass suburbanization. The reasons for this have already been encountered: class structure, capital accumulation, property development and cultural propaganda.

In California the smallholders' turf battle was joined early, as squatting became a way of life in the goldfields and towns of the 49er era. Workingmen's cottages were common in early San Francisco. The land baronies put together in the 1860s and 70s by San Francisco capitalists put a scare into the aspiring small homesteaders and proprietors of the state, and popular agitation grew widespread. In the brilliant writings of Henry George and Frank Norris, the class struggles of this era were made famous around the world.⁵⁵ In fact, the dream of small domestic property continued to be realized to an unprecedented degree in California. Los Angeles is well-known for its homes among the citrus orchards and oil fields (by 1930, an amazing 94 per cent of Angelenos lived in single-family homes), but the same thing occurred in San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland.⁵⁶ While many small homes were self-built or done by small carpenter-contractors, even the large commercial builders who took command of house construction in the Victorian era provided for skilled workers with small homes on back streets and liberal credit.

The era of the mass suburban home arrived by century's end, and the Bay Area was heading back to the land in trolleys. The purest embodiment of this democracy of shelter was the California bungalow, a small, one or one-and-a-half storied house with neither attic nor basement (a peculiar California practice). The bungalow wave hit California in the 1880s and carried through the 1920s – hence the multitude of this housing type in the central East Bay, which grew explosively during this same time. The prototypical bungalow features a large porch and wide eaves for shade, a low-pitched roof (usually hipped), and a square layout. The shift from the verticality of Victorian townhouses to the horizontality of bungalows on open lots could not have been more striking. Windows, porches, wider frontages, and front and back yards gave a feel of more light, space and access to the outdoors, even as the amount of floorspace dropped sharply from the average Victorian. At the same time, the new houses were better engineered. Floor plans were opened up and rationalized to fit the exigencies of modern domestic life: no servants, fewer children, and mother as home manager. Ceilings came down to save heat; corridors were eliminated.

Cabinets and closets were built-in. Homes also rapidly filled up with the technology of industrial life: electricity, indoor plumbing, gas heating, kitchen appliances.⁵⁷

While the bungalow came out of India and was introduced into England as a holiday cottage in the 1860s, it only became a form of mass housing in California. From California, the bungalow enjoyed immense popularity across North America through



the 1920s – re-entering Britain later. It was not the invention of a single mind, then, but a well travelled idea entering by professional networks and carried forth on a veritable flood of popular magazines and pattern books. Nor was the bungalow an offshoot of the trolleys, though they allowed lot sizes to expand and home prices to fall. It was, rather, the child of a set of propitious circumstances of political economy, as Anthony King has put it so well in his global history of this building type. But the bungalow has deeper antecedents in California than King realizes. Not only was the first shingle-style, middle-class bungalow built in the Oakland hills a scant half-dozen years after the first English seaside bungalows (by Reverend Joseph Worcester, friend and patron of the young circle of Bay Area architects), but the skilled workers of the region already occupied large numbers of free-standing small houses from which the bungalow proper was but a small step.

Bungalow suburbs represented a convergence in housing between the well-filled ranks of skilled blue-collar and white-collar workers, and the modestly paid members of the new middle class. The guiding principle for the good life was suddenly held to be 'simplicity' in design, furnishings and way of life, in opposition to Victorian bourgeois excess. The 'simple home' was as much a watchword of the middle-class ecotopians as of promoters of working-class real estate sales.⁵⁸ Bungalows were originally associated with the arts-and-crafts movement, but the term quickly came to embrace small houses of almost any style, in which handicraft was minimal. In other words, eclecticism won out here, too (the small row houses of western San Francisco even retained the solid streetfront and stylistic hints of the Victorian era).

What made this mass suburbanization of homes possible was the rapid accumulation of capital in California, and San Francisco's long supremacy on the Pacific slope. While luxury consumption took a healthy share of the wealth, a solid portion was reinvested in manufacturing and commerce that employed incoming workers. Part of it went to construction and utility networks. Part was redistributed to workers and college-educated professionals as high wages because their supply was relatively scarce. Part of it was pumped into property development by capitalists (such as Borax king, Francis Marion Smith) eager to hit paydirt again in land speculation. And another part circulated through the banks and savings companies, eager to press credit into the hands of those who would subdivide, build and buy.⁵⁹ California presents a puzzle for the theorists of Fordism, in that it led the nation in mass consumption,

grounded in automobile and housing, while never becoming a premier region of Fordist, or assembly line, mass-production industries.⁶⁰

The mass suburban house was the immediate product of builders who could make a profit on simple homes (small bungalows could be had for as little as \$400, c. 1910). Large builders learned to organize production in a more efficient manner and some prefabrication was introduced.



These builders quickly filled up subdivided lots with speculative houses, orchestrating dozens of subcontractors for all the modern add-on fixtures.⁶¹ But most builders of small homes remained modest operations well into the twentieth century. The Second World War ushered in a new breed of community builders who unified land development, construction and sales under one company, filling tracts with several hundred homes at one time.⁶² The first was not New York's Alfred Levitt at war's end, but California builders of the late 1930s and early 40s, exemplified by Henry Doelger on the west side of San Francisco, David Bohannon in the East Bay and on the Peninsula, and Fritz Burns in Los Angeles. Even Henry Kaiser, fresh from his success in roads, dams and ships, took the plunge with Kaiser Community Homes, an alliance with Burns.⁶³ These builders accelerated the pace of mass suburban development and, after the war, tracts of small homes proliferated throughout the state.

The new breed of developer was a master of marketing, including the use of model homes and the arrangement of financing working hand in glove with the federal government and their favourite mortgage lenders. The inclusion of many common factory workers and labourers among their customers depended on cheap mortgages. Federal insurance brought the 30-year mortgage into general use, while special protection for savings and loan companies guaranteed an ample pool of capital reserved for housing; postwar interest rates were historically very low thanks to the abundance of funds and lack of debt in that privileged moment in American history.⁶⁴

At the same time, houses became cheaper to build. The simple home became the 'minimal home', as architects, planners and housing reformers in the late 1920s joined forces with engineers, industrialists and developers in the pursuit of further efficiencies in house design and production.⁶⁵ Ideologically, this campaign rang the klaxons of scientific management in vogue in that epoch, as designers aimed at elimination of wasted space. (Housing researchers even carried out 'space and motion' studies of family activities.) Slab foundations came into regular use. Houses became more horizontally oriented to the street, on 40- to 50-foot lots, with a small garage built in. Back yards opened up to lawn and patio, as clotheslines and dustbins disappeared. While much was made of the ideal of mass production, including experiments in 'factory-built housing, the principal gains in building efficiency were through rationalized batch production, in which standardization of fixtures, doors and windows played a big part, along with new products like plywood, plasterboard, and prefab cabinets and serialized site fabrication from subassemblies. California led the way in these respects.⁶⁶

In the 1950s popular writers like William Whyte scorned suburbia for its facelessness – quite the opposite of the glowing press given to the Romantic suburbs. Apparently, the mass arrival of the working class and their small, unadorned homes had removed the lustre. Even the sophisticated inhabitants of the bohemian realm looked down their noses on the minimal homes, famously in Berkeley's Malvina Reynolds' song 'Little Boxes' (sung by Pete Seeger).⁶⁷ Yet what made the little boxes of San Francisco and Daly City so ridiculous at first glance was the attempt to maintain the city's tradition of the solid streetscape of undetached or semi-detached row houses at a lower height, with reduced, repetitious styles (an effect that looks charming in more upscale areas of the 1920s such as the northern waterfront, or Marina District). Nor was modernism much appreciated in small home styling. Joseph

Eichler was well-known for the aggressively modernist aesthetics of his tract home designs, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright and drawn up by a stable of young architects: flat roofs, exposed beams, large overhang, walls of glass opening onto patios. But Eichler was regarded as an oddball and the modern style was absorbed into the general eclecticism of suburban housing (even Doelger had every fifth house a modern flat-roof job). Over time, Eichler homes have been softened by heavy landscaping to look more and more like part of the bohemian woodlands. Curiously, the Bay Area's realm of mass suburban housing was never able to break fully with the landscapes of either the Victorian or the ecotopian era.

The small home realm of the Bay Area, for all its success, depended on what now seems a fragile balance between a robust centre of the class structure and ample profit rates on capital. This balance was already in doubt by the 1960s, which saw the same profit-squeeze as the 1920s and the same result: smaller homes and more multiples, including the newly minted 'condominium' and attached 'townhouses' with shared common space.⁶⁸ The postwar property boom came tumbling down in the recession of 1973–5. Toward the end of the boom, builders were already shedding the minimal house in favour of the higher-profit margins of an upscale shift to larger homes. Indeed, the taste of the upper middle class for postwar subdivisions was only slowly acquired as housing cost and size ratcheted upward.⁶⁹ As building again surged from the late 1970s through the 1980s, builders abandoned the mass of the working class, whose wages were stagnating, and turned to the expanding legions of middle- and upper-class yuppies. By the 1980s, the Doppler shift to the high end of the market had gone as far as it could, and its paradigmatic community was Blackhawk, on the flank of Mt Diablo in the fast-growing outer East Bay – monster houses too ritzy to house the masses and too vulgar to suit the bohemians.

The community developers also ran into public opposition as they became bigger and more ambitious. San Francisco Bay itself was the prime target for development (what could be cheaper land than water?) and was soon in danger of being filled up entirely by new towns such as Foster City, Redwood Shores and Harbor Bay Isle. (New Jersey's James Rouse got the most press for his new towns, but the greatest number were, once again, to be found in California.) These were quickly seen as a bigger affront to environmental sensibilities than Doelger's humble boxes.⁷⁰ From Redwood Shores to Blackhawk, the big developers ran into a wall of environmental protest that brought the Bay Area's love affair with private profit and unlimited expansion once again into question, and strong growth controls were slapped on bay, coastal and hillside development throughout the region.

A prosperous economy driven by electronics and finance, an upwardly skewed class structure, and property speculation fuelled by easy lending in the era of financial deregulation drove housing prices in the Bay Area through the roof. Prices trebled in each of the last two decades, eroding the foundation for the mass consumption home. They are the highest of any metropolitan region in the country today, and have been since at least 1975. The 1978 median price was \$84,300. In 1989 it was \$261,500. This compares with a national median of \$93,500, a California median of \$200,800 and a Los Angeles County median of \$215,800. Bay Area housing is also the least affordable in the nation, with only 10 per cent of local households able to buy the median-priced house in 1989, compared with 48 per cent nationally and 18 per cent in Los Angeles.⁷¹ This undermines the position of the working class, and

drives a wedge between those older workers who enjoyed postwar prosperity and younger workers who cannot find an affordable home anywhere within 50 miles of San Francisco or San Jose. It also makes living independently harder for single and divorced women, and favours immigrants with extended families over more isolated American-born workers. The bourgeoisie and high-paid middle class have become the only ones able to afford houses in large parts of the region. Meanwhile, mass housing for the middling classes has jumped as far out as the Central Valley, leaving the Bay Area's historic commitment to mass housing a rather distant memory, and intensifying the class schism between the élites occupying the hillsides and spruced-up Victorians, and the common people hanging on to rent-controlled apartments and cheap hotel rooms.

Conclusion

The Bay Area's distinctive aura of urbanity and suburbanity sets it off from the run of American cities, including nearby Los Angeles, even though there are many commonalities. This is not a gift of Nature nor the Market, but the outcome of favourable social conditions and fervent struggles. The ecologies indicated here only begin to capture the characteristic ways of life of the region and the living tissue of social action and political conflict behind the facades of a static 'landscape'. My treatment of Pacific coast bohemianism, transient cosmopolitanism and redwood romanticism barely scratches the surface of the region's traditions of political openness, sexual liberation or environmental fervour, for example. To be sure, the Bay Area – for all its pretensions to ecotopia, cosmopolis and *civitas* – is no idyllic retreat from the thundering hoofs of capitalist bulls. Yet some things pleasant and worthy have been carved out here, very often in opposition to the commercial and culture mainstream of America, and these need to be understood, cultivated and extended.

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Notes

- ¹ A. Scott and E. Soja, 'Los Angeles: the capital of the late twentieth century,' *Society and Space* 4, 3 (1986), pp. 249–54. The best study of LA is Mike Davis, *City of quartz* (New York, Verso, 1990).
- ² R. Banham, *Los Angeles: the architecture of the four ecologies* (New York, Harper and Row, 1971); F. Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism,' *New Left Review* 146 (1986), pp. 53–93, E. Soja, *Post-modern geographies* (New York, Verso, 1989); E. Soja, 'Inside exopolis: scenes from Orange County,' in M. Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a theme park: the new American city and the end of public space* (New York, Hill and Wang/Noonday Press, 1991), pp. 94–122; M. Gottdeiner and G. Kephart, 'The multinucleated region: a comparative analysis,' in R. Kling, S. Olin and M. Poster, eds., *Postsuburban California: the transformation of Orange County since World War II* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1991).
- ³ Key landscapes we cannot consider here include the domain of the very rich, retail centres,

the downtowns, the agrarian fringe, and industrial parks. I hope to cover these, and the politics, economics and culture of the Bay Area, in a book-length study.

- ⁴ Stephenson first saw the city in the late 1870s. The term 'instant city' is due to G. Barth, *Instant cities: urbanization and the rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1975). The one remnant of the Gold Rush city is the Jackson Square historical district at the north edge of the financial district, once filled with notorious Barbary Coast dives.
- ⁵ On the other side, the libertarian freedom of the white man was eagerly asserted against Mexican landowners, Mexican and Chinese miners, and indigenous peoples, without scruple. On this epoch generally, see Barth, *Instant cities*; R. Paul, *California gold: the beginning of mining in the far west* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1947); R. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: from hamlet to city* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1974); A. Hurtado, *Indian survival on the California frontier* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988).
- ⁶ On building in the Victorian era, see the excellent study by A. Moudon, *Built for change: neighborhood architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1986).
- ⁷ Anne Bloomfield, 'The real estate associates: a land and housing developer of the 1870s in San Francisco,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 37, 1 (1978), pp. 13-33.
- ⁸ On early suburban development in Boston, see S. Warner, *Streetcar suburbs: the process of growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962). On San Francisco's flexible order, see Moudon *Built for change: neighborhood architecture in San Francisco*.
- ⁹ The west in many ways followed eastern fashions, but not to the degree that most commentators believe, e.g., H. Kirker, *California's architectural frontier: style and tradition in the 19th century* (Santa Barbara, Peregrine Smith, 1973); and for the comparison between early California and present-day Las Vegas, see J. Findlay, *People of chance: gambling in American society from Jamestown to Las Vegas* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986).
- ¹⁰ On Victorians in San Francisco, see R. Olmsted and T. Watkins, *Here today: San Francisco's architectural heritage* (San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 1969); S. Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area houses* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1976); and J. Waldhorn and S. Woodbridge, *Victoria's legacy* (San Francisco, 101 Productions, 1978). For a (rare) favourable view of Victorian architecture in general, which emphasizes its variety, see J. Maass, *The gingerbread age: a view of Victorian America* (New York, Rinehart, 1957).
- ¹¹ For a rich portrait of late nineteenth-century San Francisco, see W. Issel and R. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986); and M. Kazin, *Barons of labor: the San Francisco building trades and union power in the progressive era* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1987). On industry vs. residences, see discussions of the growth of workshops near Alamo Square in Moudon, *Built for change: neighborhood architecture in San Francisco*; and the displacement of South Park, San Francisco's first elite subdivision, in A. Schumate, *Rincon Hill and South Park: San Francisco's early fashionable neighborhood* (Sausalito, Windgate Press, 1988). On the city residence and migrations of the rich, see the ridiculous Frances Moffatt, *Dancing on the brink of the world: the rise and fall of San Francisco society* (New York, Putnam's and Sons, 1977). Compare the elite's hold on Beacon Hill in Boston, discussed in W. Firey, *Land use in central Boston* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1947).
- ¹² The central San Francisco areas are Noe-Eureka valleys, the Haight-Cole Valley, Alamo Square and Pacific Heights. The nearby working-class areas are the Mission, Bernal Heights, Albany, El Cerrito, and central-east Oakland, with outlyers in Point Richmond, Crockett and South San Francisco. There is no comprehensive study of gentrification in the Bay Area, but see A. Kucherenko, *A view of neighborhood transition* (unpublished MA thesis, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley, 1978); and B. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in transition: the making of San Francisco's ethnic and nonconformist*

communities (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988).

- ¹³ R. Walker and the Bay Area Study Group, 'The playground of US capitalism? the political economy of the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1980s,' in M. Davis, S. Hiatt, M. Kennedy, S. Ruddick and M. Sprinker, eds., *Fire in the hearth: the radical politics of place in America* (London, Verso/Haymarket, 1990), pp. 3–82.
- ¹⁴ The story of San Francisco's architectural heritage movement has not been told. Key texts besides those cited in note 10 are W. Vail, *Victorians: an account of domestic architecture in Victorian San Francisco, 1870–1890* (San Francisco, self-published, 1964); J. Waldhorn, *Historic preservation in San Francisco's inner mission/take a walk through mission history* (Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1973); C. Olwell and J. Waldhorn, *A gift to the street* (San Francisco, Antelope Island Press, 1976); and M. Corbett, *Splendid survivors: San Francisco's downtown architectural heritage* (San Francisco, California Living Books, 1979). No doubt San Francisco was imbued with changing national sentiments about urban and historical preservation signalled by the writings of E. Maass, *Gingerbread age* and *The Victorian home in America* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1972); Jane Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities* (New York, Random House/Vintage, 1961); Peter Blake, *God's own junkyard: the planned deterioration of America's landscape* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964); and Robert Venturi, *Complexity and contradiction in architecture* (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1966); and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; but the Bay Area's activists were among the vanguard of the movement.
- ¹⁵ E. Callenbach, *Ecotopia* (Berkeley, Banyan Tree Books, 1975); and J. Garreau, *The nine nations of North America* (Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1981).
- ¹⁶ Suburban residential spaces for the bourgeoisie go back to the late eighteenth century in Britain and the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, which imported the key elements of these 'bourgeois utopias' from Britain. The key US ideologues of the new domestic and residential order were Catherine Beecher, Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux. See R. Fishman, *Bourgeois utopias: the rise and fall of suburbia* (New York, Basic Books, 1987); K. Jackson, *Crabgrass frontier: the suburbanization of the United States* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985); and R. Walker, 'The transformation of urban structure in the 19th century United States and the beginnings of suburbanization,' in K. Cox, ed., *Urbanization and conflict in market societies* (Chicago, Maaroufa, 1978), pp. 165–213. But the class project had considerably broadened with the growth of the social division of labour and of cities by the turn of the century. On the rise of the new middle class, see, for example, J. Kocka, *White collar workers in America, 1890–1940* (Beverly Hills, Sage, 1980); and M. Sarfatti-Larson, *The rise of professionalism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977).
- ¹⁷ G. Brechin, 'Living the dream in Berkeley,' *California Monthly* (March–April 1984), pp. 24–25. On early tourism, see E. Pomeroy, *In search of the golden West: the tourist in western America* (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1957). On Muir, see R. Nash, *Wilderness and the American mind* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967).
- ¹⁸ Although, as R. Longstreth, *On the edge of the world: four architects in San Francisco at the turn of the century* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1983) points out, the rustic house was worked out first on Russian Hill, before spreading into the surrounding suburbs.
- ¹⁹ The best account of the Bay Area architecture of this period is by Longstreth, *Four architects*. Like most architectural historians, however, he fails to situate the development of architecture in the wider context of professionalization of skilled work and growth of academic study. Other local accounts are T. Andersen, E. Moore and R. Winter, eds., *California design, 1910* (Pasadena, California Design Publications, 1974); and L. Freudenheim and E. Sussman, *Building with nature: roots of the San Francisco Bay region tradition* (Santa Barbara, Peregrine Smith, 1974).
- ²⁰ Typical of the Bay Area arts is less a particular style or styles than a tolerance that lets a hun-

dred flowers bloom and sequesters the odd genius working at crosspurposes with New York or Paris. This is abundantly evident in music and the graphic arts; see, for example, T. Albright, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-1980: an illustrated history* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985); and J. Gioia, *West coast jazz: modern jazz in California, 1945-60* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992).

- ²¹ On McKim, Mead and White's shingle style, see V. Scully, *The shingle style and the stick style* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1971); on English cottage revival, see A. King, 'A time for space and a space for time: the social production of the vacation house,' in King, ed., *Buildings and society: essays on the social development of the built environment* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 193-227. Credit for the first shingled cottages in the Bay Area goes to Reverend Joseph Worcester, whose Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco was the first building of note in the rustic style, with a Mission exterior; Brown, Schweinfurth, Maybeck and Polk all had a hand in its design. (Freudenheim and Sussman, *Building with nature*.)
- ²² Longstreth, *Four architects*, p. 110. Longstreth argues that there was no precedent for Polk's first multilevel house.
- ²³ Several local artists formed a short-lived Guild for Arts and Crafts, while Keeler started a Ruskin Club in Berkeley. On the Arts and Crafts influence, see Freudenheim and Sussman, *Building with nature*, and K. Trapp, ed. *The Arts and Crafts movement in California: living the good life* (New York, Abbeville Press in conjunction with the Oakland Museum, 1993).
- ²⁴ San Franciscans, including Willis Polk, soon tired of the style. Crossfertilization of ideas between north and south in California was so much the norm, as was the traffic in ideas and artists from east to west, that the issue is less the originality of a regional style than its widespread popularity and imprint on the landscape. On the Arroyo Seco group and the Mission revival craze in Southern California, see K. Starr, *Inventing the dream: California through the Progressive Era* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985); and Anderson, *California design*.
- ²⁵ The Mission style was rarely close to actual design of the Missions, and it is hard to draw lines between Mission, Spanish Baroque and Pueblo (adobe) styles, not to mention Italian Renaissance, Moorish, Byzantine and Greek styles that followed. At Stanford University, Mission was blended with Richardson's Romanesque; at William Bourn's Filoli estate in Woodside, a Mission roof sits uncomfortably on a Georgian base. Brown and Schweinfurth's design for the Midwinter Exposition in San Francisco in 1894 looks rather Moorish; Polk and Coxhead's Hearst mansion at Sunol (burned 1966) was more in the pueblo style.
- ²⁶ As, for example, the Dodd House (Wright), GTU Library (Kahn) and Moreley-Baer House (Schindler). On the Bay regional style see also D. Gebhard, 'The bay tradition in architecture,' *Art in America* 52 (1964), pp. 60-63; and Woodbridge, *Bay Area houses*.
- ²⁷ This was a stronger ideal in the US than in Britain, notes Fishman, *Bourgeois utopias*. Almost every American city had one romantic suburb by 1900, according to J. Reys, *The making of urban America* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965). They typically came with blarneyish names meant to evoke woods, dales, glens, gardens and parks.
- ²⁸ On the emergence of the community developers and their systematic use of government to private ends, see M. Weiss, *The rise of the community builders: the American real estate industry and urban land planning* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1987).
- ²⁹ O'Shaughnessy went on to make his name as City Engineer, designing the Hetch Hetchy system and the dam which bears his name. McDuffie was a member of the Sierra Club and the Save the Redwoods league, and active in creating the East Bay regional parks, as well as being founding vice-president of the California Conference on City Planning in 1914. G. Brechin, 'St Francis Wood: a misty haven for San Francisco haves,' *San Francisco Focus*, (September 1989), pp. 20-25.
- ³⁰ Charles Keeler, poet, author of *The simple home* (San Francisco, P. Elder and Co., 1904) and

patron of Maybeck usually gets the credit, but it is certain that the men were invited in for legitimacy after the real work was begun by women. On this period in Berkeley, see Brechin, *Living the dream*; and M. Weiss, 'Urban land developers and the origins of zoning laws: the case of Berkeley,' *Berkeley Planning Journal* 3, 1 (1986), pp. 7-25.

- ³¹ The removal of the new University from Oakland to a hillside suburban locale (with an early plan by Olmsted) in 1873 should be seen as an exercise in suburban rejection of city life. The Greek revival plan was promoted by the Hellenophilic president Benjamin Ide Wheeler, and paid for by the philanthropist Phoebe Hearst out of her late husband's mining fortune. The core of the Berkeley campus is one of the best formal beaux-arts ensembles in the United States, but outside the core, anything goes. After John Galen Howard came west to undertake the commission, he, too, began to design shingle-style buildings for the campus. Soon the campus reverted to the melange of Greek, Italian Renaissance and redwood edifices that typified suburban home building through the 1920s. On the roles of Phoebe Hearst and Jane Stanford in the Bay Area renaissance, see C. Wollenberg, *Golden Gate metropolis* (Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies, 1985). On the campus plan, see L. Partridge, *John Galen Howard and the Berkeley campus: beaux-arts architecture in the Athens of the West* (Berkeley, Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, 1978); and Longstreth, *Four architects*.
- ³² Zoning was not invented first in New York, as is usually claimed. It spread rapidly both in northern and southern California in the 1910s. The adoption of development regulations was progressive in the sense of rationalizing the installation of utilities, but had the added purposes of class and race exclusion and of trying to contain the overproduction of lots and homes dragging down property values. The spread of regulation is closely tied to the property cycle, which peaked around 1907. See Weiss, *Community builders*.
- ³³ E. Burns, *The process of suburban residential development: the San Francisco Peninsula, 1860-1970* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Geography, University of California, 1975) shows higher-class hillside tracts paralleling the development of larger, lower-class subdivisions down the Peninsula. Upscale ecotopian tracts often replaced large nineteenth-century estates in places like Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Woodside and Atherton.
- ³⁴ It is interesting how the beats and other bohemians moved freely from the city to Berkeley, Mill Valley, Bolinas, Sausalito and other ecotopian enclaves.
- ³⁵ The beleaguered city of Oakland set up a well-functioning One-Stop Permit centre for the fire zone, which effectively negated design review (despite pretenses to the contrary). For expressions of concern about the visual overhaul of the fire area, see the indigenous *Phoenix Journal* 2, 8 and various issues.
- ³⁶ On hotels see P. Groth, *Living downtown: the history of residential hotels in the United States* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994), whom I thank profusely for letting me see his manuscript as it went to press; many of the ideas in this section are due to his reading of the early twentieth-century city. On apartments, see J. Hancock, 'The apartment house in urban America,' in A. King, ed., *Buildings and society* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 151-89; and Elizabeth Cromley, *Alone together: a history of New York's early apartments* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990). A hotel offers rooms by the day, week or month, often with shared baths, toilets and dining rooms, and has on-site management and services (except the cheapest flophouses). Apartments have their own bathrooms and kitchens (or kitchenettes) and often separate entrances. Flats are rental units carved out of houses, usually occupying a floor each. Small establishments were generally known as lodging houses before the First World War, rooming houses later.
- ³⁷ Of 280,000 units, 156,000 are apartments, 28,000 tourist hotel rooms and 19,000 residential hotel rooms. Data from San Francisco Planning Department. Hotel rooms peaked around 1915, when there were 65,000 in all.
- ³⁸ Nineteenth-century observers remarked on the large number of people living in hotels and

- eating in restaurants, but the numbers do not exist to prove the case. The number of rooming houses in 1900 was higher than most eastern cities, as was the case throughout the west. The figures remain high right through the twentieth century (Groth, *Living downtown*).
- ³⁹ On the first property long wave, see Weiss, *Community builders*. On the second wave, see E. Eichler, *The merchant builders* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1982). Evidence suggests that the same late boom in apartments can be found in the Victorian era, too.
- ⁴⁰ See G. Duménil and D. Lévy, *The economics of the profit rate: competition, crises, and historical tendencies in capitalism* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1993); and F. Moseley, *The falling rate of profit in the postwar US economy* (New York, St Martin's Press, 1992).
- ⁴¹ Russell Jacoby, *The last intellectuals: American culture in the age of academe* (New York, Basic Books, 1987) makes a compelling case against the loss of such urban spaces.
- ⁴² On the growing numbers of women in sales and clerical work downtown, see S. Benson, *Counter cultures: saleswomen, managers and customers in American department stores* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1986); M. Davies, *A woman's place is at the typewriter: office work and office workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1982); and E. Rotella, *From home to office: US women at work, 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1981). There is not, to my knowledge, any significant work on migratory labour in the west.
- ⁴³ Data from 1910 manuscript census, thanks to Phil Ethington, History Department, University of Southern California. Conversely, 95 per cent of San Francisco homeowners (living mostly in the outer districts of small homes) were married and 81 per cent had children in 1900 (Groth, *Living downtown*). Flats also tend to be more family-oriented than apartments and hotels.
- ⁴⁴ On working women living in the city, see Joanne Meyerowitz, *Holding their own: working women apart from family in Chicago* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of History, Stanford University, 1983).
- ⁴⁵ Groth, *Living downtown*. On the fear of women's freedom in cities, see E. Wilson, *The sphinx and the city* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991). On the American cult of the family, see S. Coontz, *The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap* (New York, Basic Books, 1992).
- ⁴⁶ Such terms easily overlapped, as when the crucial Conference on Housing and Home Ownership of 1930, called by President Hoover to determine urban policy, cited cheap hotels and entertainment districts as their chief example of 'urban blight'.
- ⁴⁷ On the tenor of US urban reform over the years, see R. Walker, *The suburban solution: capitalist urbanization in the United States* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Geography and Environmental Engineering, John Hopkins University, 1977). On the discourse of the early twentieth century, see Groth, *Living downtown*; R. Fischler, *Standards of development* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley, 1993). R. Beauregard, *Voice of decline: the postwar fate of US cities* (Cambridge, MA; Blackwell, 1993). Compare this with Edward Bellamy, the Utopian author of *Looking backward*, or Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who were proponents of dense, multiple living in cities. On the preference of many women for denser urban living, see M. Marsh, 'From separation to togetherness: the social construction of domestic space in American suburbs, 1840-1915.' *Journal of American History* 16, 2 (1989), pp. 506-27; and D. Hayden, *The grand domestic revolution: a history of feminist designs for American homes, neighborhoods and cities* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1987).
- ⁴⁸ Cf. C. Hoch and R. Slayton, *New homeless and old: community and the skid row hotel*. (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989). And in the 1960s and 70s, some 30,000 mental patients were unloaded from the state hospitals to the inner cities with little provision for continuing care.
- ⁴⁹ No one, to my knowledge, has worked out the economic changes in the urban base in the

- 1930s and 40s. On changes in Federal urban policy, see M. Gelfand, *A nation of cities: the Federal government and urban America, 1933-1975* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1975); and Walker, *Suburban solution*.
- ⁵⁰ On the destruction of San Francisco and Oakland, see C. Hartman, *The transformation of San Francisco* (Totowa, NJ, Rowman and Allenheld, 1984); and E. Hayes, *Power structure and urban policy: who rules Oakland?* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972). A key planning document was the work of the estimable Mel Scott, later to become an environmentalist. See M. Scott, *Western Addition District: an exploration of the possibilities of replanning and rebuilding one of San Francisco's largest blighted districts*. (San Francisco, Department of City Planning, 1947).
- ⁵¹ See M. Berman, *All that is solid melts into air* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1982) on modernity, urban renewal and the bourgeois fear of dealing with the devil (from Goethe's *Faust* onwards).
- ⁵² It is this banality and the human heart beating within that Bill Owens captured so tellingly in his 1960s photographic study of Livermore, in the outer East Bay. B. Owens, *Suburbia* (San Francisco, Straight Arrow Books, 1973).
- ⁵³ This powerful national ideology was more than Jeffersonian agrarian values, as it touched the heart of the artisan and industrial craft workers of the nineteenth century. Home ownership meant control and stability, not to mention the lordship of the family patriarchy over his dominion. Immigrants felt that owning property and a home was the way to be a 'real American'. In this century, 'own your own home' became the slogan that steered capitalist interests, worker independence and state policy into a convergence. On home ownership, see C. Perin, *Everything in its place: social order and land use in America* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977); M. Doucet and J. Weaver, *Housing the North American city* (Montreal, Queens-McGill University Press, 1991); E. Blackmar, *Manhattan for rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1989); C. Clark, *The American family home* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1986); R. Harris and C. Hamnett, 'The myth of the promised land: the social diffusion of home ownership in Britain and North America,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, 2 (1987) pp. 173-90; and Marsh, 'Separation to togetherness'.
- ⁵⁴ For the Fordist reading of the golden age of housing, see R. Florida and M. Feldman, 'Housing in US fordism: the class accord and postwar spatial organization,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 12, 2 (1988), pp. 187-210. No one disputes that the detached single-family house flourished after the Second World War, but family-owned small homes have been prevalent in small towns and cities such as Baltimore since the nineteenth century. Nationally, the leading urban home owner group by 1900 was the rising professionals, with skilled workers next and common labourers lagging badly until after the Second World War - but rates vary dramatically over time and by class, with ground gained and lost quickly (see, for example, the detailed figures for Hamilton, Ontario, in Doucet and Weaver, *Housing the city*, Table 7.7). Postwar prosperity and federal policies generated extraordinarily high ownership rates by the 1960s (close to 70 per cent), but by English standards, home ownership rates among the US working class were already very high - 25-40 per cent - in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Peter Rowe, *Making a middle landscape*, (Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1991).
- ⁵⁵ On Henry George, see C. Barker, 'Henry George and the California background of progress and poverty', *California Historical Society Quarterly* 24, 2 (1945), pp. 97-115. On Norris' *Octopus* in light of economic conditions in California, see G. Henderson, *Regions and realism: social spaces, regional transformation and the novel in California, 1882-1924* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, 1992).
- ⁵⁶ On Los Angeles, see R. Fogelson, *The fragmented metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Los

Angeles, University of California Press, 1967). San Francisco home ownership in 1910 was 38 per cent, compared to 20 per cent in New York and 26 per cent in Chicago (data from 1910 Manuscript Census, thanks to Phil Ethington, Department of History, University of Southern California). On early San Francisco housing, see generally Bloomfield, *Real estate associates*; and Moudon, *Neighborhood architecture*. On the Santa Clara valley see G. Matthews, *A California middletown: the social history of San Jose during the depression* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of History, Stanford University, 1977).

⁵⁷ On the bungalow and its epoch, and the key role of the California bungalow in particular, see King, *The bungalow: the production of a global culture* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); C. Lancaster, *The American bungalow* (New York, Abbeville Press, 1985); R. Winter, *The California bungalow* (Los Angeles, Hennessey and Ingalls, 1980); and D. Holdsworth, 'Regional distinctiveness in an industrial age: some California influences on British Columbia housing,' *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 12, 2 (1982), pp. 64–81. On improvements in house design, see A. Gowans, *The comfortable house: North American suburban architecture, 1890–1930* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1986). On the efficient and mechanized home, see A. Forty, *Objects of desire: design and society, 1750–1980* (London, Thames and Hudson/Cameron, 1986); and R. Miller, 'The Hoover in the garden: middle class women and suburbanization, 1870–1920,' *Society and Space* 1 (1983), pp. 73–87. On the family-centred home, see Marsh, 'Separation to togetherness'; G. Wright, *Building the dream: a social history of housing in America* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1981); G. Wright, *Moralism and the model home: domestic architecture and cultural conflict in Chicago, 1873–1913* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980); and D. Hayden, *Redesigning the American dream* (New York, Norton, 1984).

⁵⁸ See, for example, Keeler, *The simple home*, and Maybeck's efforts to design a cheap home for the masses; these men were radicals by the standard of downtown lawyers, of course. ('Simplicity' was later replaced by 'efficiency' as the code word of modernity, a change which indicates a loss of idealism and gain of Taylorism by the 1920s.)

⁵⁹ The first innovation in home financing was installments, said to have been invented in Cincinnati in 1880s, but San Francisco's Homestead Associations of the 1860s already allowed people of modest means to buy lots on the installment plan, according to Bloomfield, *Real estate associates*.

⁶⁰ Allen Scott, the leading student of industrialization in Southern California, has also come to this view in his recent work. See A. Scott, 'Industrial urbanism in Southern California' (unpublished paper, Lewis Center, UCLA, Los Angeles, 1994).

⁶¹ Doucet and Weaver, *North American city*, argue that integrated mass production had appeared in places by 1900, but the generalization of the community builder only came later and in no case did even the largest merchant builders handle their own sales; this was contracted out to realty firms. Weiss, *Community builders*, p. 40.

⁶² Some huge tracts (of both small homes and barracks housing) were built during the war, encouraged by the Federal government because they housed defense workers, particularly around aircraft plants in Los Angeles and shipyards in the Bay Area. G. Hise, *Roots of the postwar urban region: mass housing and community planning in California, 1920–1950* (Unpublished dissertation, Department of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley, 1992); and G. Hise, 'Home building and industrial decentralization in Los Angeles: the roots of the postwar urban region,' *Journal of Urban History* 19, 2 (1993), pp. 95–125.

⁶³ For the Levitt-centred view, see Eichler, *Merchant builders*; Jackson, *Crabgrass frontier*; and B. Checkoway, 'Large builders, federal housing programs, and postwar suburbanization,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 4, 1 (1980), pp. 21–45. On Doelger, see G. Brechin, 'Mr Levitt of the Sunset,' *San Francisco Focus* (June 1990), pp. 23–26; Brechin claims that Doelger was the biggest homebuilder in the country before Levitt. On Burns and Kaiser, see Hise, *Postwar urban region* and 'Industrial decentralization'. Kaiser took many

of his cues from David Bohannon, who built Rollingwood in Richmond during the war for Kaiser's shipyard workers.

- ⁶⁴ Ned Eichler, *Merchant builders*, calls finance the key to the postwar mass market for homes. See D. Harvey, *The urbanization of capital* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); A. Schneiderman, *The hidden handout and the Keynesian welfare state* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California Berkeley, Department of Sociology, 1994); Gelfand, *Nation of cities*; Walker, *Suburban solution*; and Florida and Feldman, *Housing in Fordism*.
- ⁶⁵ The case for the new minimum ideal in homes is carefully made by Hise, *Postwar urban region*. He argues that the small home tract was perfected during the Depression by the Farm Security Administration for its rural labour camps in the Central Valley, proposed by Berkeley activist Paul Taylor and designed by Bay Area architect Vernon DeMars.
- ⁶⁶ Los Angeles builders were, overall, the most advanced in subcontracting and the complex of building material suppliers was largely self-contained. See Eichler, *Merchant builders*. Kaiser Homes, in particular, led the way in rationalizing mass construction. California had a definite advantage in year-round work that kept capital turning over. Standards for buildings had been heavily promoted by Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce, as he carried the gospel of modernization in housing from California to Washington in the early 1920s. E. Hawley, ed., *Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce: studies in new era thought and practice* (Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1981). They continued to be pushed by the new Federal Housing Administration in the 1930s.
- ⁶⁷ It must be said that Doelger gave little regard to Nature, building tracts right on the bluffs where the San Andreas Fault plunges into the sea and the ground is wrenching beneath the rows of little houses. J. McPhee, *Assembling California* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993).
- ⁶⁸ Kaufman and Broad broke into LA with these, while George McKeon of Sacramento blanketed the state with four-unit condominiums.
- ⁶⁹ On this housing shift and the passing of the first generation of merchant builders by the 1973–5 recession, see Eichler, *Merchant builders*. Joe Eichler worked in Foster City and on San Francisco apartments before going bankrupt in 1974.
- ⁷⁰ See M. Scott, *The future of San Francisco Bay* (Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, 1963).
- ⁷¹ Figures from the Federal Home Loan Bank Board and California Association of Realtors. Add to this the destruction of the protected pool of mortgage finance represented by the now-defunct Savings and Loan industry, which self-destructed in a desperate attempt to stay profitable in the face of financial deregulation and the loss of their interest-rate advantages. See Schneiderman, *Hidden handout*.