The Pearl District: Renaissance Neighborhood

Paper Delivered at the

Society for American Regional and City Planning History Conference

Arlington, Virginia

November 2, 2019

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The Pearl District was, is and will be an eclectic mix of activities and buildings. A place where creativity is encouraged and where contrast is part of the urban environment. It is and will be a neighborhood where residents, businesses and developers work together to build a community. A neighborhood where change and new ideas are accepted as part of life so long as the past is respected in the process.

Pearl District Development Plan

Sustainability is the definitive ethic of our time. Its measure of humanity forces a moral response to the specter of climate change, species extinction, and accelerating rates of resource depletion.[1] Sustainability, as put forth in the United Nations landmark report, *Our Common Future*, imposes "limits to growth" to ensure development "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[2] A generation later, Pope Francis infused sustainability into the lifeblood of the New Testament in his encyclical, *Our Common Home*. "We need," he wrote, "to think of containing growth by setting some reasonable limits and even retracing our steps before it is too late."[3] *Our Common Home* set the agenda for the Vatican summit on climate change, and Portland, Oregon's Charles Hales was one of two mayors from the United States invited to the event.

Hales trip to Rome was a signature moment in the city's long ascent to the top tier of sustainable cities.[4] In 1979, Metro, the nation's only regionally elected governing board, established a state mandated urban growth boundary (encompassing 24 municipalities, three counties, and 364 square miles) to *limit the growth* of metropolitan Portland, and preserve some of the most productive agricultural land on the planet.[5] At the same time, a path-breaking plan was turning Portland's auto addled downtown—"the Graveyard of the West"—into a prototype pedestrian scaled, green urban center.[6]

Transforming sustainability into livability is Portland's hallmark, and today the downtown and its attendant districts—the Central City—draw a stream of delegations. To manage the pilgrimage, Portland State University established First Stop Portland, and the premier attraction is the Pearl District. "The best large walkable urban neighborhood located in the core of an American city," Phillip Langdon writes in *Within Walking Distance: Creating Communities for Livability*.[7] For *New York Times* architecture critic, Paul Goldberger, "The Pearl District is a place that like Portland itself that does everything right."[8]

A Renaissance Heritage

The Pearl District is rooted in the American Renaissance, the period between 1890 and the Great Depression when the first generation of professional planners and landscape architects ordered the industrial city on classical lines and around nature. Like their Florentine forbearers, they translated prosperity into a new civic art that drew inspiration from long-standing precedents.[9] The 1893 Chicago's World Fair announced their aspirations: "The greatest meeting of artists since the fifteenth century," sculptor August Saint-Gaudens claimed.[10] Daniel Burnham and Frederick Law Olmsted oversaw the creation of the Fair's grand exposition, the "White City," which captivated 12 million visitors. The influence of Parisian formal Beaux-Arts planning was apparent, as monumental statues mixed with formal groupings of gleaming, white neo-classical buildings. Yet, the White City was uniquely American. Olmsted designed the *Wooded Isle* to grace the serpentine lagoon running from Lake Michigan to the center of the fairgrounds, a form of sacred grove that testified to the Arcadian strain of the American landscape architecture.[11]

Within a decade, Burnham applied this formula to the *MacMillan Plan* to update L Enfant's plan for Washington D.C. By then, Olmsted Sr. had retired, and Burnham hired his son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., to replace him. Their majestic work inspired scores of cities to take up park and city planning, and, in 1903, Olmsted Jr. and John Charles Olmsted—the Olmsted Brothers—prepared one of the nation's first comprehensive park plans for Portland. Influenced by Darwin they exemplified a new cohort of reformer that valued expertise and scientific study, but they were not bereft of spiritual aspiration. Over the course of the American Renaissance the urban environment took form on new lines, as the sacraments of *laissez-faire* politics were challenged by plans to secure a "fit and fair" life.[12]

In 1912, the Olmsted Brothers' work informed an ambitious plan Edward Bennett prepared for Portland. An École des Beaux-Arts graduate, Bennett integrated an expanded park system with a network of Parisian style boulevards that terminated at a downtown civic core at the intersection of Burnside (the primary east-west roadway marking the downtown's northern boundary) and Broadway. Acclaim greeted the majestic vision, but recession and war dampened enthusiasm and it was only implemented in bits and starts. In 1918, Charles Cheney, another École des Beaux-Arts product, prepared a more pragmatic conception of a future city. After an initial setback, the city council adopted Cheney's comprehensive plan and an attendant zoning code in 1924. Planning became part of the political bargaining process, but it had a narrower scope. Social science and statistics, not artistic blueprints, guided decision-making and, by the Great Depression, the civic art of the American Renaissance was passé.[13]

The American Renaissance left its mark in Portland. Short blocks, gridded streets,

small green squares, and the terra-cotta facades of civic buildings still define the urban core. The highlight is the line of Park Blocks accentuating the city's cultural institutions. Sited on a Park Block next to the Art Museum, Alexander Proctor's statue, *Theodore Roosevelt, Roughrider*, epitomizes the era.

Like many artists of the time, Proctor gained essential training at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair where his sculptures were paired with the work of Daniel French Smith (who designed the *Abraham Lincoln* statue for the Lincoln Memorial). Shortly after the event, Proctor won a Rinehart Scholarship to attend the École des Beaux-Arts. After two years of study and several years of practice in Paris, he returned to the United States well versed in civic art. He became an acclaimed sculptor and, in 1922, he fashioned a humanist proclamation in a city devoted to industry, a bronze figure of Roosevelt set on a horse atop a six-foot pedestal.[14] Depicting the citizen-hero Roosevelt's image of confidence, determination, and strength recalls Cincinnatus, the patron saint of civic republicanism.[15]

Plans from the American Renaissance inspired virtue but not always equity. Today, the values it lauded—the heroic, the humane, the tragic—are lost in a society awash in irony and entertainment, and where critics claim the tradition of American civic art furthered an elitist "hierarchical urbanism."[16] Yet, the Park Block's picturesque scenery is timeless, intermingling harmony and variety in a magnetic beauty that highlights history and informs current plans.

In contrast to the South Park Blocks, the North Park Blocks are more functional. They gained their moniker in 1865, after John Couch deeded five blocks to the public north of Burnside Avenue on alignment with the South Park Blocks. Surrounded by a

burgeoning working-class population, the city's first playground was constructed on one of the rectangular greens in 1906. Heavily used, it modeled the neighborhood playground that the Olmsted Brothers wanted placed within walking distance of every residence. Between 1920 and 1940, industry displaced residential uses in the adjacent area and, as population dwindled, the North Park Blocks fell into decline.[17] By the 1980s, the once vital public spaces were forlorn and forgotten, used primarily by transients and plagued by crime. The tide of development, however, again shifted, and the downtown's revival spurred interest in the area. In 1988, the *Central City Plan* proposed extending the North Park Blocks to a new park on the Willamette River that would be the centerpiece of the River District.

The idea of a River District grew out of the 1972 *Downtown Plan*, which proposed extending the downtown to include a "highly urban" neighborhood that housed a substantial resident population, and provided jobs, services and recreation. The triangular area, north of Burnside Avenue, east of Interstate 405, and south and west of the Willamette River (the Pearl District), was also expected to "embrace the Willamette River."[18] The *Central City Plan* advanced this concept, and four years later the area's property owners hired ZFG consultants to prepare a *River District Vision*. Empowered to visualize an ideal community, they harkened to a cardinal principle of Renaissance urbanism.[19]

During the Italian Renaissance, spaces devoted to the contemplation of scenic vistas broke from the medieval tradition, which had imposing gothic cathedrals guide the eye to the heavens and contemplation of a godly realm.[20] The contemplation of the intersection of nature and humanity also informed Burnham's precedent plans, where linear greens

linked civic institutions to waterfront parks with sublime views of rivers, bays, oceans, and lakes. The *River District Vision* did the same by realigning the *Central City Plan*'s park scheme. *Powell's Bookstore*, an iconic Portland institution occupying an entire block, was set on axis with a series of parks leading to a grand open space on the Willamette River. The consultants also drew inspiration from the historic Alphabet District neighborhood, picturing a dense urban neighborhood built on a traditional 200 by 200-foot street grid.[21]

The *River District Vision* was a radical idea at the time. For a generation, auto-dependent master plans had favored cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets that insulated neighborhoods in a series of pods. In the late 1980s, *River Place*, downtown Portland's first significant mixed-use infill project, incorporated a primary element of drivable suburbanism—the "dead worm"—the dead-end, cul-de-sac street that severs a subdivision from its surroundings.[22] Returning to a human scaled conception of urbanism, this vision proved compelling as it informed the series of plans that defined the Pearl District over the next decade.[23] In the process, the new neighborhood was formed on the lines of the American Renaissance.

The *High Character* of Historic Preservation

The Pearl District is also a product of the architecture of the American Renaissance. It contains Portland's largest assemblage of pre-World War II architect designed warehouses, the highlight being a staple of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Romanesque Revival structures. These buildings went largely unnoticed until 1982, when an update to Goal 5 of the State Planning Act required a five-step process to identify and protect historic places. The next year the Portland Chapter of the American

Institute of Architects (AIA) assessed the building stock of the Northwest Triangle District—the current day Pearl District—in a report, "The Last Place in Downtown."[24]

The area was unplanned and devoid of civic identity. It had no school or neighborhood association, but there was a bounty of historic warehouses being leased or sold. A small artistic community had gained a foothold, which was incubating an eclectic mix of businesses devoted to the arts and a bohemian lifestyle. The area could become "a definitive and distinctive district," the AIA contended, provided city officials acted to protect 90 buildings found worthy of preservation. The architects proposed creating a historic preservation district for the quadrant between Lovejoy and Burnside Avenues, and between I-405 and the North Park Blocks. The remainder of the land north of Lovejoy was projected to be an office park.

In 1983, office parks were part of the lexicon of suburban development. John Carroll, one of the area's first developers, even projected a driving range as a viable option for the vacant land outside the warehouse zone.[25] Such ideas fell away as the incentives and amenities of historic preservation made investments in urbanism viable. The city council changed the area's industrial zoning to mixed use (office, residential, retail) in the mid-1980s, which opened up a new realm of possibility. Developer Al Solheim began turning aging warehouses into self-storage units, and found the cheap, underutilized, architecturally intact structures to be "wonderful historic buildings."[26]

At the same time, a half dozen art galleries had opened and, in 1986, First Thursday gallery walk began.[27] The studios, residences, and galleries springing up in warehouses surrounded by auto repair shops and industrial uses instilled the neighborhood with a new vitality. Residents were in close proximity to the downtown, but without its formality or

expense they could partake in a less conventional lifestyle that gave birth to the Pearl District. In the same manner that an oyster turns refuse into a pearl, a small cohort of artists and entrepreneurs were turning the desolate industrial zone into an urban jewel.[28]

After investing in the expanding art scene, Solheim entered into a dialogue with Leo Williams, a former Portland Planning Bureau director and the most influential voice of the Historic Landmarks Commission. In fast moving and often predatory process of real estate development, historical buildings are often lost unless protected. In 1968, the Portland city council adopted a historic preservation ordinance, the second on the west coast after Los Angeles. Williams implemented the policy, and he soon realized that working collaboratively with the private sector was the key to success. Williams and Solheim worked in concert to set the underpinning for a neighborhood that was built on the past but adaptable to the future. In 1987, the city council established the 13th Avenue Historic District, which was listed on the National Historic Register of Places.[29]

The eight-block, twelve-acre area had twenty multi-storied, architect-designed warehouses—the largest collection of such buildings in the city. The historic structures, along with the mix of loading docks, roof top water towers, metal awnings, and remnants of old Belgian block street pavers, offer an invaluable authenticity. It typifies the "High Character Score" that attracts investment, according to the Preservation Green Lab, the research arm of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Their analysis of a score of cities revealed that High Character Scores "generate jobs and dollars, attract more families and businesses, and jump start the revitalization of blocks and neighborhoods."[30]

In 1988, Solheim converted the seven-story Blumauer-Frank Drug Company Building (the historic district's tallest structure) into the *Irving Street Lofts*. The first significant

investment in residential living in the Pearl District, the retrofitted reinforced concrete structure constructed in 1925 offered a new prototype. Six floors were converted into apartments, while the bottom floor was filled with office and retail uses. Tax abatements and credits made the project viable, and other developers followed suit. In 1994, a 1905 building, the former headquarters of the Eoff Electric Company, was rehabbed to provide the first condominiums in the Pearl District. The four-story structure offered fourteen units with exposed brick, beam ceilings, reclaimed wood floors, and the large arched windows that defined early 20th century architecture.

During this period, John Carroll made the most important breakthrough. A local developer, he pioneered preserving and building the mid-story residences that define an urban neighborhood. After assessing a series of thriving districts adjacent to San Francisco's cultural institutions, Carroll concluded that the Pearl District could provide an alternative to suburban living that was predicated on walking to amenities, essential shopping, and transit. In 1996, he took an important step forward by bringing the first large condominium, *Chown Pella,* to the market, a 68-unit rehabbed 1918 warehouse.[31]

Carroll's commitment to walkable urbanism was a labor of love. He learned to coordinate with city agencies and civic groups to navigate the nuanced lines of design, product quality, and profit. To master this multifaceted process, he worked on one project at a time. According to Stewart Ankrom, president of Ankrom Moisan (the firm has sixteen commissions in the Pearl District), Carroll epitomized the "hands on developer," architects favor. "These developers have vision, are passionate, and care about doing good urban buildings and making money doing it—but not the other way around."[32]

Ankrom's firm worked with Carroll to create *Chown Pella*, which was inspired by the Clock Tower Lofts in San Francisco. When it opened in 1996, the surrounding area was unfinished and raw and trains still rumbled past the building on the way to the nearby Weinhard Brewery. Carroll recognized that the first residents were "a little gutsy" in their quest for urban living.[33] Industrial strength living in the Pearl" is what Carroll labeled inhabiting units with integrated open loft spaces and exposed brick and heavy timbers offered."[34] This early cohort had also invested in authenticity. Portland author Matthew Standler notes that, "The great success of the Pearl lies in the seamlessness with which designers wove these new minted tokens of urbanity into the area's scant residue of history."[35]

Chown Pella was also one of the first projects reviewed by the Pearl District Planning and Transportation Committee. Formed by the Pearl District Neighborhood Association in 1994, the committee consisted of both residents and business owners.[36] Its most important duty was reviewing new development proposals, and members operated under guidelines that required projects to conform to the neighborhood's pedestrian scaled urbanism and context-based architecture. In particular, the expectation was negating "suburban dwelling forms" in favor of buildings with an "urban warehouse character."[37]

Projects were critiqued and even exenterated, but with the understanding that the goal was to demand quality architecture that shaped an urban neighborhood suited for working and living. "Watching developers like Homer Williams and John Carroll and their architects bring their projects to the Committee, and see them be eviscerated by some members who were more than qualified to comment on design was something I will not forget," David August, a committee member since 1997, states. "The professional

members on that committee were demanding that the quality of the projects had to be better than good. Most often, the final product was much better than what was originally presented."[38]

National Exemplar

In 2001, the opening of Portland's Central City Streetcar drew international attention. The 2.4-mile line running between Portland State University and the Alphabet District was the first project of its kind to be built in half a century. Federal and state funds paid 65 percent of the $146 million bill for but the project required significant local outlays in physical and social capital.[39] The groundwork was laid in 1993, when councilman (now Congressman) Earl Blumenauer established an advisory streetcar committee.

John Carroll chaired the group, which assessed design, operational issues, and redevelopment strategies to revitalize Portland's Central City neighborhoods. On the transportation side, the goal was to run streetcars in tandem with autos, bicyclists, and pedestrians in a network of complete streets. Stopping frequently and running at a slow speed, the streetcar sets cadence for walkable urbanism. The goal was to ensure pedestrian safety and comfort, and the committee identified an array of needs: sidewalk upgrades, landscaped pedestrian ways, street furniture, public art, refurbished street lamps, and upgrades to building fronts. Funding for these improvements and the streetcar network was secured through a creative public-private partnership formalized in the River District Urban Renewal Plan.[40]. Funding for these improvements and the streetcar network was secured through a creative public-private partnership formalized in the *River District Urban Renewal Plan*.[41]

The Portland Development Commission oversees the planning and management of urban renewal areas. To promote development in these economically distressed sites, tax increment financing (TIF) is utilized. In the River District Urban Renewal Area, this initiative froze assessments of existing property values, and tax revenues from new properties in excess of those levied at the time of the TIF designation were dedicated to capital improvements in the area for a 20 to 25-year period.[42] TIF was crucial to the development of the Pearl District, as it accounted for 18.5 of the capital financing of the streetcar network. An additional 14 percent of the monies came from Local Improvement Districts, which placed a special assessment on speculative properties to capture a portion of the value leveraged by the streetcar.

Between 1998 and 2008, the Pearl District proved that it was possible to build a dense urban neighborhood centered on rail transit and human movement. Public sector plans set the design guidelines and the investment structure, while private developers spent over $3 billion in transforming the Pearl District into a prototype urban neighborhood. By 2008, properties located within three blocks of the Central City line were developed at 90 percent of their allowed densities, compared with a 43 percent rate outside the area. A decade before the reverse had been true.[43] Moreover, a population shift was returning Americans to city centers, and the Pearl District epitomized the urban future.[44] "Midrise housing in a highly accessible central-city location combined with high-quality urban streetscapes dotted with parks and plazas has proven to be a winning formula," a team of experts from the University of California-Berkeley concluded. "The Pearl District has prompted some 60 cities to follow Portland's lead, planning their own streetcars as a hoped-for catalyst to urban regeneration."[45]

Homer Williams, the principal of Hoyt Street Properties, the largest land holding in the Pearl District, played a key role in bringing the neighborhood's plans to fruition. A genuine visionary, the native Portlander was skilled at putting together multiphase, long-term projects. "He's good at looking at the future and what needs to be done," his former partner Pat Prendergrast states.[46] In contrast to developers outside of Portland, the University of Oregon graduate was an accomplished participant in the city's never-ending debate over good design. For Williams, the public good was not a brand but a special point of urban life, and he had an unbounded tolerance for public meetings. Soft-spoken and unpretentious, he also had an unshakable confidence in his place-making abilities. He gave up car ownership in 2000, and before that he regularly walked the 15 blocks to his Pearl District office to hone his design skills.[47] "The 30-foot interval between the sidewalk and the second story is integral to good urbanism," and arranging this setting was an art form that defined Hoyt Street Properties.[48] What separated Williams from other developers was not just stepping beyond the status quo to advance walkable urbanism, he embraced the conundrum of urban renewal: affordable housing.

Since the 1972 *Downtown Plan*, providing a range of housing in the urban core had primed city policy. In 1997, Williams brokered a deal with the PDC to dedicate 35 percent of Hoyt Street Properties' housing units to residents with low to moderate incomes. The PDC agreed to devote TIF funds to cover 30 percent of the cost. In addition, Hoyt Street Properties received density bonuses to reap bigger profits, which, in turn, curtailed the cost of constructing affordable housing.[49] Critics hammered city officials for glad-handing a developer but, in 1997, the Pearl District was an unknown and building anything higher than four or five stories was risky. In addition, Williams

invested in a project of a scale and complexity that the city had never seen, and the result was transformative. Hoyt Street not only attracted a new generation of buyers attracted to urban living, it provided a setting suited for tenants of affordable housing to have healthy and engaged lives.[50]

That one developer implemented the plan for a large contiguous parcel produced a collective coherence at a definitive scale. Quality details, congruent architecture, a viable mix of uses, and a superior pedestrian environment created a place that was convivial but not showy. Apartments designated for affordable housing units and private condominiums occupied the same block, with courtyards, pedestrian greenways, and plazas augmenting the arrangement. The shops, restaurants, and offices lining the ground floors were mostly independent businesses with open glass frontages and understated signage. This assemblage also reflected Jane Jacobs's contention that Portland was "improved not with a lot of gimmicks, but with good intelligent reasons."[51]

Jacobs had a special affinity for Portland. Her last public appearance was in the city, an event Portland scholar Chet Orloff made the focus of a documentary, *Jane Jacobs: Parting Words*.[52] Jacobs' principles—mixing old buildings and new, varying heights and uses, and designing to the human scale—came to fruition in a place that embodies the sidewalk ballet and gives public transit star billing.

By 2010, 60 percent of Pearl District residents did not commute by automobile, per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled was 35 percent below the national norm, and automobile ownership was half the national average.[53] This lifestyle is illustrated by the "Go By Streetcar" sign, which is spelled out in six-foot high, red fluorescent letters and set three

stories above the intersection of two streetcar lines. This message represents for some, "An explicit Portland reality."

Yes, indeed! This sign is a constant reminder—it's high time to permanently park our gas guzzling, pollution spewing, steel and glass bubbles at the curb. Or just sell it to someone in Washington or California. Get on the streetcar![54]

The Pearl District: Laboratory for Affordable Housing

Turning an amalgam of declining warehouses into a thriving urban neighborhood required innovations in both economics and urbanism. In Portland, TIF was originally limited to the River District Urban Renewal Area, and the Pearl District was the focal point. Coupled with low-income housing tax credits and appropriate state funding, $83 million in TIF had underwritten the construction of 2,200 affordable housing units in the Pearl District since 2005.[55] In 2016, the Portland City Council put TIF into play to address gentrification across the city. With $32 million in TIF set to accrue by 2021 within the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area, these monies were allocated to construct apartments, preserve historic buildings, and help families keep their homes in a rapidly gentrifying area.[56]

By tapping into a neighborhood's rising property values, TIF offers perhaps the best strategy to constrain the predatory process of gentrification because it puts funding in the exact place where development pressure is the greatest. In contrast to inclusionary housing, which requires developers to provide affordable units in a project, TIF responds proportionally to demand. As development increases and values rise, TIF funding also increases. Inclusionary housing requirements lack this mechanism, as this policy tends to drive up the cost of development by placing the load cost solely on new residential units.

The effect is to "restrict supply, and likely worsening affordability problems," according to economist Joe Cortright.[57]

Utilizing TIF for affordable housing also meets the test of scale. For instance, New York's inclusionary housing program produced 200 units in the city's five boroughs in its first year, a number the Pearl District's TIF program matched over the same period. Moreover, TIF financing in redeveloping neighborhoods ensures that affordable units get built in conjunction with new market rate housing, which precludes the establishment of high-income enclaves.[58] The test is meshing affordable and market rate housing, a skill that defines the Pearl District.

Although identified as a tony neighborhood for hipsters and the wealthy, the Pearl District is far from affluent. The median income is slightly below the city average and thirty percent of its residents live in subsidized housing. Over time, the careful merging of market and affordable housing created a neighborhood where livability is enjoined across the income spectrum. "We are not altruistic," Patricia Gardner, the longtime chair of the neighborhood Planning and Transportation Committee, states, "we believe an urban existence should fit everyone. Maybe because we've always had affordable buildings, they've never been an issue."[59] In fact, the Pearl Court, a five-story apartment community with 199 units that serves residents earning between 40 percent and 60 percent of median income, was one of the neighborhood's first multi-story buildings when it was constructed in 1997. Pat Prendergast was the developer, and the building's interior courtyard and quality exterior now fits seamlessly into a setting enhanced by both an attractive park and pedestrian realm, and served by streetcar [60]

By the early 2000s, workforce housing (designed for residents earning 80 percent of median income) was a staple in the Pearl District, and the Sitka, which opened in 2005, is an exemplar. Covering a city block next to Tanner Springs Park, the building's lightly undulated brick façade highlights a prominent glass corner. In addition, its upper units are set back to break up the six-story structure's massing so it harmonizes with the pedestrian realm. A thoughtful aesthetic also informs a verdant landscaped interior space where two-dozen trees unite the public and private realm in a manner that recalls the region's primal forests. A favored pedestrian cut through, this slice of green epitomizes developer Ed McNamara's desire to provide sustainable, communal living. McNamara also coupled the building's strong envelope with efficient lighting, heating and cooling systems. An investment that reduced both the carbon footprint and operating costs. "This project didn't set out to be spectacular, but rather a simple, relatively humble, enduring place to live," Portland architect Brian Libby writes. "To me the greater importance of the Sitka Apartments is the fact that McNamara and people at various agencies made it happen."[61]

A Loeb Fellow at Harvard, McNamara is a pioneering figure. A for-profit developer, he took a non-profit approach to merge sustainability and affordability in his projects.[62] The Sitka provided 209 units, including 47 two-bedroom units and, while families live here, McNamara took on the challenge of exclusively meeting the needs of families in his next project, The Ramona.[63] Building sustainably for families with children earning up to 60 percent of median family income demanded innovation. Working with Ankrom Mosian architects, McNamara constructed a six-story brick building with 138 two- and three-bedroom units that employed high-quality casement windows and low-flow water

fixtures to improve energy efficiency. Producing energy on-site with solar photovoltaic panels and solar thermal water heating further lowered utility costs. The expense of air conditioning was traded for a ventilation and exhaust system that distributes freshly conditioned air into each unit. In the winter, a heat recovery system in attics preheats the air, which saves energy and provides tenants with higher indoor air quality. A 31,000 square foot eco-roof and a filter in the large u-shaped courtyard treat one hundred percent of the stormwater on site.[64] Finally, quality materials were used to negate operating costs over the building's life cycle. This approach appealed to real estate underwriters who "started accounting for this kind of holistic thinking," author and architect Peter Brown writes, "which increased the value of buildings that incorporated sustainable systems that were most costly to build on the front end but less costly to operate over the long run."[65]

The Pearl District is the focal point for another experiment in affordable housing—inclusionary zoning. In 2016, the Oregon State Legislature passed a measure that allowed jurisdictions to institute this measure, and, in Portland, it was coded into the city's new comprehensive plan. Developers of projects of more than 20 units are required to make 20 percent of units affordable (defined as 80 or 60 percent of mean family income), and to mitigate costs, they are offered an in-lieu fee option or an incentive package that can include regulatory incentives (e.g. reduced parking requirements or density bonuses) or financial incentives (e.g. property tax abatement).[66] City Council member Dan Saltzman, who oversaw the Portland Housing Bureau during this period, took the concept a step farther. "A big part of accommodating growth is to increase the height of all of our buildings." At the same time, "all height and floor-area-ratio bonuses should be tied to affordable housing," he stated. "All of them."[67] In the

Pearl District, implementing this new policy is testing the ability of citizens to reconcile equity and sustainability.

Property rights are sacrosanct, but in the Pearl District there is also an expectation that new development will give something back to the neighborhood.[68] Finding this point of equanimity is what steels the planning process and instills the neighborhood with a sense of place that gives meaning to daily life. "Rather than obsessing over social connections or the engineering of relationships," a well functioning neighborhood "focuses on ensuring that form does not undermine human connections and instead makes it possible," urban scholar Emily Talen writes.[69]

"Connecting people" through "equitable design" is the goal of a "once in a generation project" in the Pearl District, the redevelopment of the 14-acre post office site (purchased by the city) located on the eastern edge of the Pearl District at the terminus of the North Park Blocks. It is the centerpiece of the attendant 32-acre Broadway Corridor, envisioned by city officials to be "a sustainable, mixed-use urban quarter" that will "permanently change Portland's downtown landscape, knit the city together, and attract regional, national and international media attention."[70] Projected to house 3,000 residents in mixed income units and attract businesses that will support 4,000 employees, the post office development will link into the Pearl District's pedestrian passageways and the proposed Green Loop.[71] The key feature is the two-block extension of the North Park Blocks, which provides a grand civic space straight out of the American Renaissance.

Classical values, nature, and crisp geometry energized the American Renaissance, and they are set to do the same in Pearl district. A definitive building will terminate the extended North Park Blocks and provide the focal point for a system of public spaces

designed to "just be: places that don't feel like you need a specific purpose, activity, or transaction to be there." The large centralized open space has an additional function—providing a venue for "play" for a range of ages and activities.[72] In 1906, the North Park Blocks were the site of Portland's first playground, and, by 2025, they should define recreation for a new generation of urban dwellers.

The redevelopment of the post office site also prioritizes sustainability. Carbon net zero is the goal, with 85 percent of generated trips projected to be non-single occupant vehicles.[73] The provision of affordable housing is also a primary goal. Subsidized units will constitute at least 25 percent of all housing, and serve two segments: households earning up to 60 percent median family income, and households earning up to 30 percent median family income.[74] Enfolding these units into a rich urban fabric is vital to the project's success in a neighborhood that, above all, connects people. "Community is what is important," Homer Williams, contends, "people want to feel safe and connected. If you provide them what they want they will be engaged and they will come."[75] This timeless formula is set to activate a signature project destined to define the Pearl District, and, most importantly, secure the city's most valuable asset, the virtue of its citizens.

Notes

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[1] On July 29, 2019 humanity consumed its yearly allowance of resources, which means humans are using nature 1.75 times faster than Earth's ecosystems can regenerate. Tom Herbert, "Earth Overshoot Day 2019," Evening Standard, July 31, 2019. https://www.standard.co.uk/futurelondon/cleanair/earth-overshoot-day-2019-humanity-planet-natural-resources-a4199166.html. See Bill McKibben, *Falter: Has the Human Game Begun to Place Itself Out* (New York: Henry Holt, 2019); Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (New York: Henry Holt, 2014).

[2] World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 16. The commission used the term sustainable development, which has been shortened to sustainability, Peter Newman and Jeffrey

Kenworthy, *Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1999, 1.
[3] Pope Francis, *Praise be to You: On Care of Our Common Home* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2015), 193.
[4] Kent Portney, *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 80-85, 260-63.
[5] Richard W. Judd and Christopher S. Beach, *Natural States: The Environmental Imagination of Oregon, Maine, and the Nation* (Washington D.C.: Resources for the Future, 2003), 190-203.
[6] Peter Brown, *How Real Estate Developers Think: Design, Profits, and Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 73.
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2. Protecting Historic Buildings
3. Preserving Open Space
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