

Urban Politics and the Vision of a Modern City: Philadelphia and Lancaster after World War II

URBAN RENEWAL TRANSFORMED America's older cities in the aftermath of World War II, and perhaps nowhere was the impress of federal dollars better demonstrated than in Pennsylvania. Philadelphia demolished the infamous "Chinese Wall," an elevated structure that supported the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks entering downtown from the west, which divided the city on north-south lines and, at a time when trains were powered by diesel, resulted in enormous amounts of pollution that affected the quality of life in adjacent blocks. The city and its redevelopment authority also undertook other projects that attempted to modernize downtown and eliminate blight in residential areas. Collectively, these projects received national acclaim, and planner Edmund Bacon was featured on the cover of *Time*. Lancaster, sixty-six miles to the west, commenced its ambitious urban renewal program in 1957, a decade after Philadelphia had done so, and turned to Philadelphia for lessons on how best to revitalize its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. As was true of the Quaker City, Lancaster attempted to solidify its downtown commercial center and also to eliminate blight in residential neighborhoods. A comparative analysis of urban redevelopment in these two cities reveals the conflation of a modernist political sensibility—a revulsion against boss-dominated Republican rule and an emphasis on professionalism and expertise—as well as a modernist philosophy of design that attempted to replace aging downtown and residential structures with new buildings that reflected a postwar aesthetic. Modernism in architectural design was itself a political statement, a sweeping away of the old in favor of the new. As Swiss architect Le Corbusier was wont to state, modernism was predicated upon tearing down the old and avoiding any local traditions in new construction. This essay attempts to explain both the achievements and the limitations of renewal in the two cities. It also uses

a comparative perspective to assess how effectively leaders in a large and a small city were able to bring a vision of both a modern political culture and a modern urban landscape to fruition.¹

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The victory banners that waved from second-story windows across Philadelphia's narrow row-home streets in 1945 and 1946 barely disguised the city's postwar shabbiness. A 1939 Works Progress Administration *Real Property Inventory* had branded 35 percent of the city's housing substandard, and the war only exacerbated these grim conditions. One typical aging neighborhood, the Poplar area, a maze of dark alleys and dank, pestilent courtyards bounded by moldering tenements, sat just north of City Hall. Fires, deadly tenement house collapses, and code enforcement actions left ugly gaps in the area's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tapestry of courts, shanties, row houses, factories, and junkyards. Recent immigrants—Italian, Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian—still lived in these graying neighborhoods along with a rising tide of black migrants from Virginia and North Carolina who were drawn during the war to the city's booming shipyard and war materials industries. Newly arrived blacks swelled the population not only of the city's historic seventh ward, described by W. E. B. Du Bois in his *Philadelphia Negro* (1899), but also of neighborhoods in West and North Philadelphia like the East and West Poplar areas adjacent to Center City.²

The Great Depression and World War II had not spared the narrow, traffic-clogged streets and byways of Philadelphia's downtown. While shimmering new Art Deco skyscrapers like William Lescaze and George

¹ We are grateful to Randall Miller and Michael Birkner for inviting us to contribute to this special issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* and to Howard Gillette and Ted Muller for comments on an earlier version of this essay. Some of the material presented in this essay was published, in different format, in John F. Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal: Urban Planning in Philadelphia, 1920–1974* (Philadelphia, 1987) and in David Schuyler, *A City Transformed: Redevelopment, Race, and Suburbanization in Lancaster, Pennsylvania 1940–1980* (University Park, PA, 2002). For Le Corbusier's strictures on modernism, see especially Peter Geoffrey Hall's chapter 7, "The City of Towers," in his *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, updated ed. (Malden, MA, 1999).

² Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal*, 56, 84–93; W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899; New York, 1967). For a vivid image of Philadelphia's African American housing on the eve of World War II, see John F. Bauman, "Black Slums/Black Projects: The New Deal and Negro Housing in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History* 41 (1974): 311–38.

Howe's Philadelphia Savings Fund Society tower gave downtown Philadelphia a heroic skyline, plunging assessed property valuations in the 1930s and consequent budget slashing by Old Guard Republican mayors left Center City, like the adjacent neighborhoods, with unrepaired streets, old, darkened gas lamps, and reeking, over-chlorinated water. Horse-drawn wagons still collected trash and the ashes from a city largely reliant on anthracite coal for heat and energy. As in other cities during the 1930s, bankruptcies and tax defaults forced the demolition of stately but old and once-established downtown businesses, which in turn produced parking lots or ugly, one- or two-story commercial structures called "taxpayers." To attract consumers, businessmen often slapped modernistic, "streamlined" facades on old Victorian frontages. Although wartime gas rationing and increased use of public transit somewhat reinvigorated the city's central business district, by 1945 the downtown department stores—Wanamakers, Lit Brothers, and Snellenburgs—all dreaded the inevitability of postwar decentralization and the loss of white, middle-class women shoppers.³

Indeed, V-J Day promised to end a war-born prosperity based upon full employment in Philadelphia's shipbuilding, textile, clothing, tool, and heavy-metal manufacturing economy. The prospect only worsened in light of the do-nothing political leadership ensconced in 1945 in Philadelphia's High Victorian Republican fortress, City Hall. Since the late 1930s, a decade when Philadelphia spent exuberantly on school building, stadiums, and subway extension, the city's Republican leadership had followed a rigid policy of fiscal retrenchment. In the face of unemployment lines, evictions, soup kitchens, and a crumbling tax base, Mayor J. Hampton Moore stubbornly refused to participate in New Deal work relief programs even when prodded to do so by conservative city businessmen. However, in 1935 the political maverick S. Davis Wilson, the independent-minded Republican city controller who in 1934 had supported Democrat George Earle for governor, defeated the candidate

³ On conditions in Philadelphia, see Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal*, 56–57; and Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940–1985* (Baltimore, 1990), 23–25. A good picture of Philadelphia during the war years can be found in Frederic M. Miller, Morris J. Vogel, and Allen F. Davis, *Philadelphia Stories: A Photographic History, 1920–1960* (Philadelphia, 1988). For other cities, see Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880–1950* (New Haven, CT, 2001), 218–21, 237–38, and Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago, 2004), 126–52, 165–67.

of the resurgent Democratic Party, John B. (Jack) Kelly, and moved into the mayor's office. Wilson promptly sought New Deal Works Progress and Public Works Administration projects for the city. Yet the new schools, water and sewer, housing projects, and the S. Davis Wilson Airport (the modern Philadelphia International Airport) barely made a dent in addressing the problem of Philadelphia's crumbling infrastructure. When in 1941 former City Council president Bernard Samuels, a protégé of boss William S. Vare, took office as mayor, Philadelphia slipped, perhaps uncomfortably, back into the realm of the "corrupt and contented." It remained there during the World War II years.⁴

Not all Philadelphians, however, fit the contented description. Jack Kelly had started the rebellion against corruption and complacency. By the late 1930s, a group of "Young Turks," as they called themselves, and who have been described by James Reichly as "a little band of idealists in the city's gentleman's clubs and intellectual associations," coalesced around the leadership of patrician Philadelphia lawyer Walter Phillips. Initially nonpartisan, the band of young, middle- and upper-class professionals, lawyers, architects, university professors, social workers, and housing reformers epitomized an energetic brand of postwar progressivism. In addition to Phillips, the group included Abraham Freedman and Dorothy Schoell Montgomery of the highly respected Philadelphia Housing Association, wealthy attorneys Joseph S. Clark and Richardson Dilworth, and architects Oscar Stonorov, Louis I. Kahn, G. Holmes Perkins, and Edmund Bacon.⁵

At first, the Young Turks sought to lift the city from its deep lethargy by having the state legislature enact a new home-rule charter. In 1939, when the legislature refused, the Turks sought instead to create a new, activist city planning commission. Phillips, like Richard King Mellon, chair of Pittsburgh's Citizens Committee on the City Plan (CCCP), con-

⁴ On Philadelphia politics in the 1930s, see John F. Bauman, "The City, the Depression, and Relief: The Philadelphia Experience, 1929-1939" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1969). On S. D. Wilson, see T. Henry Walnut, "S. Davis Wilson, Mayor of Philadelphia," in *The American Politician*, ed. J. T. Salter (1938; Westport, CT, 1975). The phrase "corrupt and contented" to describe Philadelphia was coined by Lincoln Stephens in "Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented," *McClure's Magazine* 21 (May-Oct. 1903): 249-63.

⁵ On the "Young Turks" as a "little band of idealists" see James Reichly, "Reform Party Leadership," in *Big City Mayors: The Crisis in Urban Politics*, ed. Leonard Ruchelman (Bloomington, IN, 1969), 239. Also see Donald A. Krueckeberg, "The U.S.A. 1938-1955: Hans Blumenfeld," in *The American Planner: Biographies and Recollections*, ed. Donald A. Krueckeberg, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ, 1994), 378-401. On Progressivism, see Daniel Aaron, *Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives* (New York, 1961).

sidered planning a “non-controversial” way to awaken the somnolent city. During the 1940s, these private-sector leaders envisioned public intervention as vital to the future of their cities. Political scientist John H. Mollenkopf has described this cohort of innovative “political entrepreneurs” as part of a progrowth coalition. Perceiving their cities as suffering from economic decline and political stasis, these private actors, together with elected or appointed officials such as David Lawrence in Pittsburgh, Joseph Clark in Philadelphia, and John Collins and Edward Logue in Boston, came to see redevelopment as a way to “overcome this [inertia] and reap political benefits along the way” by delivering an improved quality of life for their constituents. To its proponents, redevelopment was reform, a progressive strategy for solving pressing urban problems and making their cities more livable.⁶

As in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia’s progrowth coalition came together in the early 1940s, united by the idea of overhauling the city’s impotent planning commission and launching a major redevelopment program. Together, Phillips and Bacon, whom Phillips had recruited in 1941 to head the Housing Association (after its former executive director, Bernard Newman, died suddenly) and who, with Stonorov, had designed Phillips’s North Philadelphia home, led the charge for a new planning commission. In 1939, Phillips and the Turks had formed a City Policy Committee that advocated a new planning commission with real power, one that, like New York’s, was politically integrated with city government and empowered to determine the total physical development of the city. Although acting mayor Samuels rejected the idea of a more powerful city planning commission, Bacon mobilized a coalition of eighty-five city and neighborhood agencies behind the planning commission idea. In 1942, City Council created the new commission, and the City Policy Committee dissolved to become the Citizens Council on the City Plan, which brought together more than one hundred community organizations to oversee the progress of city planning and the rebuilding of a modern Philadelphia.⁷

⁶ John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, NJ, 1983), 5–6; John F. Bauman and Edward K. Muller, *Before Renaissance: Planning in Pittsburgh, 1889–1943* (Pittsburgh, 2006), 259–69.

⁷ Jeanne R. Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time: Progress and Poverty in America’s Renewing Cities* (New York, 1967), 320–23; John Guinther, *Direction of Cities* (New York, 1997), 42; John F. Bauman, “Ed Bacon’s Legacy: The Story of a Philadelphia Planner,” *Planning: The Magazine of the American Planning Association* 72 (Apr. 2006): 15.

Just a glance at the composition of Phillips's architect-heavy Policy Committee, which included Kahn, Stonorov, and Perkins, indicates its modernistic bent. It also suggests, as this article does, that architecture, ordinarily considered purely in the aesthetic realm, can be a political instrument. Purged would be the gritty industrial past—the old brick mills, warehouses, stables, coal and ice yards, flop houses, lofts, burlesque houses, and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century narrow alleys and courts (like Franklin's) where, for a century and a half, the city's ethnic and racial poor existed without indoor plumbing and modern heat. In its place would arise a dazzling metropolis replete with glass towers, verdant parks, greenways, and sparkling fountains. This was the glittering vision of a modern Philadelphia that, with Bacon's help (he continued to work on it while stationed in the Pacific during World War II), architects Stonorov and Kahn organized into the spectacular 1947 Better Philadelphia Exhibit held at Lit Brothers Department Store, which demonstrated how planning might transform the city of dark industrialism into a modern city. The exhibit, which attracted more than four hundred thousand visitors, presented a vision of a purified city cleansed of those ice yards and slums; instead of the fetid and filthy Dock Street and Delaware Avenue waterfront, it promised a marina replete with yachts. A moldering slum would become a revitalized Society Hill.⁸

The spirit of the Swiss-born modern architect Le Corbusier infused Philadelphia's vision of the new city; however, it was a "humanized" Le Corbusier that Bacon conjured. Philadelphia's planning director loved the city's eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century townhouses that lined the quaint byways of Society Hill and that graced Chestnut, Walnut, Locust, and Pine streets. Likewise, he prized the treasures of Penn's original plan and the city's historic eighteenth-century landmarks—Independence and Carpenters' halls, Old Swedes' Church, and Washington, Rittenhouse, and Franklin squares—all anchored in the center by City Hall. The rest of the city was negotiable.⁹

Bacon's humanism had been nurtured by Eliel Saarinen at Cranbrook Academy, outside Detroit, where he learned that well-designed architecture consisted of more than just functional structures. Saarinen taught

⁸ On the "purified" image of cities, see Richard Sennett's *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life* (New York, 1970). On Bacon's greenways and Society Hill, see Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 98–103; Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time*, 323.

⁹ Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 84–103; Edmund N. Bacon, *Design of Cities* (New York, 1974), *passim*.

that, in order to be humane, modernist buildings must flow seamlessly into the continuum of a larger urbanistic space. His philosophy harkened to the ideas of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright more so than the stark International Style of Le Corbusier and the German Bauhaus of Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Martin Wagner, who since the late 1930s had found a home at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. However much it may have been softened by Saarinen's influence, Philadelphia's "renaissance" would be impelled by modernism.¹⁰

During the 1940s, international modernist organizations such as *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), whose members included Stonorov, Kahn, and Bacon, were deeply committed to postwar urban planning. CIAM espoused comprehensively planned, functionally zoned cities, and, like the Bauhaus, mass-produced housing in distinctive residential districts. Bauhaus modernists, in company with Saarinen humanists, sought to use architecture and urban design to purge the detritus of the industrial past and to clothe congested city space with parks, greenways, and other delightful amenities. Kahn and Stonorov had championed modernism while employed as architectural consultants to the Philadelphia Housing Authority during the late 1930s, '40s, and early '50s. They hosted a Le Corbusier visit to postwar Philadelphia, and Stonorov convened a meeting of CIAM at his Phoenixville farm outside Philadelphia. The 1947 Better Philadelphia Exhibit, the template for postwar redevelopment, epitomized modernism.¹¹

Under Bacon's leadership, Philadelphia avoided the sterner modernism evident in the endless rows of public-housing towers later erected in Chicago, St. Louis, and other cities. Just as Le Corbusier's 1922 *Ville Contemporaine* vision of Paris spared Notre Dame and the Place Vendôme, Bacon's vision spared Philadelphia's City Hall, Old Swedes' Church, Independence Hall, and many other historic landmarks. Like Gropius, Bacon treated urban space as a palimpsest, but architectural treasures were not static objects—they were part of an evolving urban

¹⁰ On Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius, and architectural modernism at Harvard, see Jill Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism: Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus Legacy at Harvard* (Charlottesville, VA, 2007), and Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 59. On Saarinen, see Guinther and Eliel Saarinen, *The City: Its Growth, Its Decay, Its Future* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).

¹¹ On CIAM, see Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism*, 145–147, and Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960* (Cambridge, MA, 2000). See also Krueckeberg, "The U.S.A. 1938–1955: Hans Blumenfeld."

dynamic. Historic works like John McArthur's Second Empire City Hall represented "points of direction" toward and away from which planned redevelopment must flow harmoniously. Much was salvageable, much was not; in those places denuded by renewal, modernism would flourish. Phillips and Bacon surrounded themselves with distinguished modernist designers eager to transform the postwar city.¹²

Modernistic planners, even those with humanistic inclinations like Bacon, focused on the city's physical plight, not on the social and economic distress, racial segregation, and income inequality underlying the evidence of urban decay. Words like "blight" and "obsolescence" slipped easily from the planners' and reform politicians' tongues. Redevelopment meant expunging those moldering old neighborhoods that planners and business leaders saw strangling the downtown economy. Modernists agreed with planners such as Saint Louis's Harland Bartholomew, who called the center city "a nightmare of ugliness and blandness." Blight was also costly in terms of social, police, fire, and sanitation services. While Philadelphia's humanist/modernist architects like Kahn and Bacon designed holistically and with sensitivity to history, they decried the ugliness of much of the city's architectural and planning inheritance and eagerly awaited the opportunity to replace it.¹³

Together with financiers, retailers, real estate brokers, and other proponents of a progrowth strategy, postwar modernists preached that the downtown must be made safe and attractive, indeed reclaimed for middle-class women shoppers who in the 1920s began fleeing to the "cool, green [suburban] rim" of the city. An attractive, functionally efficient downtown inviting to both middle-class shoppers and middle-class homebuyers would be equally free of traffic congestion and made accessible by peripheral parking garages and sleek beltways and express highways such as those viewed by millions at Norman Bel Geddes's Futurama exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Cleansed of skid rows, slums, and other obsolescence, the modern city would manifest itself as a specialized domain of office towers, banks, financial houses, scintillating department stores, libraries, museums, hospitals, and universities. The poor, especially racial minorities, were not a part of the modernist vision

¹² Guinter, *Direction of Cities*, 58–59; Bacon, *Design of Cities*, 264–307; Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 204–40.

¹³ Fogelson, *Downtown*, 343; Isenberg, *Downtown America*, 194.

for center city.¹⁴

In 1945, consummation of this vision awaited a political revolution in Philadelphia, in Harrisburg, and in Washington, DC. Not only did such massive urban redevelopment require cities to wield eminent-domain powers to condemn acres of land for development purposes (powers possessed by few places), but cities needed massive amounts of money from either giant insurance companies (Metropolitan/Equitable) or the federal and state governments to write down the cost of purchasing and clearing expensive urban land. For postwar Philadelphia's civic reform coalition, neither was possible given the city's current Old Guard Republican regime.¹⁵

One of those reformers, Richardson Dilworth, took that message of change to the city's streetcorners in 1947. Dilworth lost to incumbent mayor Barney Samuels that year, but the issue of rampant political corruption he raised in the campaign lingered. When frustrated underpaid city police and firemen begged Samuels for a raise, the mayor, in 1948, was forced to convene a blue-ribbon panel led by an economist with the Bureau of Municipal Research. Robert Sawyer's investigation uncovered a pattern of gross, pervasive corruption in city government. Numerous indictments followed, and several of those indicted committed suicide. The nationally publicized scandals, which portrayed Philadelphia as a hotbed of corruption, at last outraged the city's deeply conservative business community. In 1949, Harry Batten of the advertising firm of N. W. Ayer and Son spurred the organization of the Greater Philadelphia Movement to promote "good government." In 1951, the GPM used its corporate clout to embolden the state legislature to enact a home-rule charter. Among other things, the charter created a strong mayor-council form of government, an office of managing director, a Commission on Human Relations, and a stronger city planning commission by having the director report to the mayor and by ordering the commission to prepare annually an updated six-year comprehensive plan and capital budget.¹⁶

The spirit of reform reverberated throughout the endless tapestry of

¹⁴ Mollenkopf, *Contested City*; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985); Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000* (New York, 2004). For the business vision for downtown, see Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 1–85.

¹⁵ Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, 41–51.

¹⁶ Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time*, 324–25; Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal*, 102–3; Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, 54–55.

row-house blocks comprising postwar Philadelphia. In 1949, the aristocratic reformer Joseph S. Clark and his longtime friend Dilworth ran successfully—given the scandals that rocked the Republican administration—for city controller and city treasurer respectively. Two years later, in 1951, with housing and renewal as well as corruption dominating the election, Clark won the mayor's office and Dilworth the district attorney's. For Philadelphia, 1951 was a golden moment: the city had dynamic new leadership, a new charter, a newly empowered planning commission, an Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) able to "take" property under eminent domain, and 1949 federal legislation that funded urban redevelopment up to 90 percent of the cost of purchasing and clearing sites for "primarily residential" purposes. Philadelphia was finally poised to execute Bacon's ambitious plans.¹⁷

Philadelphia and Pennsylvania had passed redevelopment acts in 1945. Within two years, the city launched its war against the blight and obsolescence that were portrayed so compellingly in Stonorov and Kahn's *Better Philadelphia Exhibit*. The URA, in concert with the planning commission and the American Public Health Association, identified nine "blighted" areas covering much of near North, West, and South Philadelphia, areas encompassing most of the city's African American neighborhoods.¹⁸

Unlike Pittsburgh, where Mayor David Lawrence, Richard King Mellon, and the progrowth Allegheny Conference on Community Development launched their Golden Triangle plans immediately after World War II, Philadelphia's conservative business and political establishment balked at such big plans, even those featured in the exciting *Better Philadelphia Exhibit*. Instead, consistent with the "primarily residential" clause in the federal 1949 Wagner-Ellender-Taft legislation, Philadelphia pursued what city planners called "shelter-oriented" redevelopment, particularly in the East Poplar neighborhood. Kahn and Stonorov—designed East Poplar blended Quaker-sponsored "self-help" rehabilitation of one block of old houses with a mix of federally subsidized moderate-income and low-rise public housing. But neither the Friends Neighborhood Guild mutual housing project nor the 173-unit Federal Housing Administration-funded low-rise Penn Town ultimately

¹⁷ Reichly, "Reform Party Leadership," 239–48; Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 164; Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, 47–57.

¹⁸ Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal*, 120.

proved economically successful enough to halt the graying process. However, by preserving historic churches and other salvageable urban fabric, Bacon, Kahn, and Stonorov demonstrated Philadelphia planners' sensitivity to the city's historic character even as they embraced a modernist aesthetic.¹⁹

If, in 1949, East Poplar reflected Bacon's and his modernist architectural colleagues' "shelter-oriented" plans for a new North Philadelphia, Society Hill evinced Bacon's vision of the direction of Philadelphia's renewal east of City Hall, an area extending toward Independence Hall, Carpenters' Hall, old Dock Street, Delaware Avenue, and the neighborhood of aging Georgian two- and three-story treasures once the domain of the Society of Traders. Bacon had already approached the state of Pennsylvania and the National Park Service about clearing away old businesses, warehouses, and wretched housing from the area around Independence Hall. Derelict at midcentury, the Society Hill area contained block after block of historic gems. In the Better Philadelphia Exhibit, Bacon had envisioned the area with lush greenways and small parks delicately cut into the eighteenth-century fabric. Not until 1956, with real estate baron Albert M. Greenfield chairing the Planning Commission and Pittsburgh's Jack Robin heading the newly formed Old Philadelphia Development Commission, did work begin on restoring Society Hill. The neighborhood was transformed from an ethnic enclave into a romantic upper- and middle-class Elysium. Ultimately, Bacon anchored Society Hill's axis on the east with I. M. Pei's ultramodern twin residential towers, built on space reclaimed by relocating Philadelphia's produce markets from Dock Street to the GPM-sponsored Food Distribution Center, and on the west by City Hall and his renaissance tour de force, Penn Center, the principal emblem of Bacon's award-winning rebirth of Philadelphia, which earned the planner his place on the cover of *Time*.²⁰

The planning for Penn Center began shortly after Clark's November 1951 election. Immediately, Bacon broached the subject of pressing the

¹⁹ Roy Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business, and Environmental Change* (1969; Pittsburgh, 1995), 106–41; Fogelson, *Downtown*, 378. On "shelter-oriented" renewal, see Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal*, 105–12. See also Frieden and Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.*, 24–26.

²⁰ Lowe praised Bacon's "comprehensive planning" in *Cities in a Race with Time*, 313–34. See also Bacon, "Philadelphia's Redevelopment: A Progress Report," in *Architectural Forum* 103 (July 1955): 118–27, reprint copy found in the Housing Association of the Delaware Valley Papers, Temple Urban Archives, Temple University, Philadelphia; Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 223–27.



“View of Proposed Garden Concourse Entrance to Pennsylvania Suburban Station from Sixteenth and Market” (that is, Penn Center). American Institute of Architects, Philadelphia Chapter, *Philadelphia 1950—Challenge to the Changing City: Yearbook* (Philadelphia, 1950).

Pennsylvania Railroad to demolish its abandoned Broad Street Station, which stood opposite City Hall. With the station would fall the railroad's stone viaduct, the “Chinese Wall,” which divided north from south Market Street west of City Hall. Bacon unveiled to Clark his design to replace the nightmarish Pennsy complex with a giant sparkling plaza featuring three glass office towers, all linked to City Hall and the Market Street corridor by a underground esplanade, gardens, and upscale shops. He envisioned Penn Center as the centerpiece for the revival of Philadelphia's commercial life and the advent of what he called a futuristic “movement system,” a multilevel transportation network for pedestrian, commuter rail, and subway travel. Sensing an absence of business support for such a radical move, Clark rebuffed Bacon. Yet, a year later, in 1953, with the Pennsylvania Railroad now committed to demolishing the eyesore, Bacon formally revealed his plans before a luncheon cohosted by the CCCP and the Chamber of Commerce, where it was enthusiastically received.²¹

²¹ Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time*, 331–32; Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 3–6, 225–26.

Penn Center formed the apex of Bacon's larger Triangle Plan visible in the Better Philadelphia Exhibit, which the city's once-reticent business class at last embraced. The Triangle Plan sought to demolish the tangle of moldering industrial buildings and housing in the large swath between Market Street, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and Fairmount Park. It was anchored to the northwest by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Here, in the Triangle, Bacon, Kahn, and Stonorov proposed an ensemble of Corbusian (International Style) high-rise office buildings, hotels, and residential towers that would frame a broad, tree-lined boulevard (now John Fitzgerald Kennedy Avenue).²²

By the mid-1950s, as Bacon had hoped, the city's Democratic administration, together with business and civic elites who were part of the progrowth coalition, rallied behind his modernist vision of a Philadelphia cleansed of corrupt politics and purged of its gritty industrial inheritance, including large swatches of its aging working-class housing. The prospect of a shimmering modern central city made safe for the mass consumerism emblematic of the 1950s energized the movement. Rehousing the thousands of families uprooted by renewal—many of them poor African Americans—posed a problem for Philadelphia's redevelopment authority, as did the white, often violent opposition to any effort by the city to relocate uprooted black families into small public-housing complexes secreted amid white neighborhoods. Long before the 1968 National Advisory Commission on Civic Disorders report, Joseph Clark had warned of an emergent donut-shaped urban configuration, a white middle-class urban core surrounded by black, economically stagnant slums. But, in the glow of the 1950s modernist vision, Philadelphia's progrowth business, civic, and planning coalition hoped that the Stonorov, Kahn, and Louis McAllister-designed high- and low-rise public housing, ideally scattered amid rehabilitating white neighborhoods, would soften the social impact of downtown rebuilding. Alas, as the North Philadelphia riots of August 1964 attested, this did not happen, which was the ultimate political failure of postwar modernist planning.²³

²² Bacon, "Philadelphia's Redevelopment"; Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time*, 331–32; Guinther, *Direction of Cities*, 1–6; Bauman, "Ed Bacon's Legacy," 13–16; Frieden and Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.*, 17–18; Bacon, *Design of Cities*, passim.

²³ Bauman, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal*, 147. Other case studies of the negative consequences of postwar renewal in large cities include: Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ, 2003); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ, 1996); and Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago, 1983).

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As was the case in Philadelphia, Lancaster, in 1945, was an old city that planners and elected officials believed was desperately in need of modernization. Documents from the 1930s, including a Home Owners Loan Corporation Residential Security Map and a Works Progress Administration *Real Property Survey*, detail the degree to which Lancaster's building stock was aging. The Residential Security Map red-lined two areas in the southeast quadrant of the city, the neighborhood where most of Lancaster's small African American population lived, while the *Real Property Survey* documented the degree to which the city's building stock was aging: almost a third of the city's dwellings were more than fifty years old and were deemed inadequate because they lacked plumbing, heating, or utilities. The density of building, narrow alleys, and courtyards lined with substandard housing, many of which still relied on outhouses, defined the areas where the city's immigrants and racial minorities lived. Downtown commercial buildings were also aging and, in many cases, encrusted with the soot and grime that gave metaphoric title to Lewis Mumford's classic *Brown Decades*. At the dawn of the post-World War II era, after seventeen years of depression and war when there was little investment in modernizing existing buildings, Lancaster desperately needed to undertake a comprehensive program that would ensure the continuing vitality of its downtown and its residential neighborhoods.²⁴

The city had begun to prepare for the future in 1944, with a postwar planning study that focused on blighted residential neighborhoods. The following year, Pittsburgh engineer Michael Baker prepared the city's second comprehensive plan, which again highlighted blight, which he described as a "cancerous tissue." "Like a cancer in a human body," he warned, blighted areas would spread to other parts of the city. Baker advocated an aggressive program of slum clearance, but otherwise he assured civic leaders that downtown was prosperous and would remain so, especially if some of the retail activity scattered about the city consolidated in

²⁴ Residential Security Map and accompanying typescript, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Home Owners Loan Corporation Records, RG 195, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Works Progress Administration, *Real Property Survey, Lancaster, Pa.* (n.p., 1936), 18, 27, 31, and passim; Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895* (New York, 1931).



View looking northeast toward Victor Gruen's concrete superstructure, Lancaster Square, 1971. Buchart Horn, Inc. photo.

the area around Penn Square.²⁵

Following Baker's lead, and influenced by Baltimore's Waverly Program of code enforcement, the city targeted a few buildings for demolition and had its housing officer focus on using police powers to force owners to improve properties in the worst neighborhoods. These efforts were largely ineffectual, and in 1957, to secure the ability to undertake a comprehensive revitalization program, Lancaster organized a redevelopment authority, under provisions of the U.S. Housing Act of 1949 and the

²⁵ Michael Baker Jr., *A Comprehensive Municipal Plan, City of Lancaster, Pennsylvania* (Rochester, PA, 1945), 94.

1945 state redevelopment act, to renew the city. Six years after Joseph Clark had been elected mayor of Philadelphia on an urban revitalization program, the future of a graying Lancaster became a major issue in the 1957 election, with Democratic candidate Thomas Monaghan pledging enthusiastic support for the redevelopment authority. "Our cities, most especially Lancaster, have a bright future," he asserted. "The realization of this future, however, will depend on our success in meeting the complex problems of urban life with courage, imagination, and, above all, know-how." As in Philadelphia, Monaghan, the first Democratic mayor elected in the twentieth century, pledged a "government of economy and efficiency"—which clearly echoed the Progressivist mantra of Clark and Dilworth—as well as an aggressive approach to urban renewal. That pledge included a modernist vision for the city that, he believed, was essential to enable Lancaster to counter the suburban trend.²⁶

Monaghan's first act to increase the level of expertise in City Hall was naming Burrell Cohen the first full-time director of the city's planning commission and, simultaneously, executive director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Lancaster. One of the first documents Cohen and the planning commission published after Monaghan took office in 1958, a study of the central business district, proposed a strategy for curing "downtownitis"—the same malady that affected Center City Philadelphia—which he defined in terms of traffic congestion, an increasing vacancy rate in the central business district, and "the general deterioration and obsolescence of structures and streets," through an ambitious program of revitalization. The following year, Cohen issued a second report that was even more striking in its Corbusian call for replacing the old with the new. In *Lancaster Moves Ahead*, he emphasized that Lancaster's future was "entirely dependent upon its ability to remove that which is old and obsolete, that which is undesirable and substandard, whether they be homes, business establishments or industrial facilities and, by doing so, make land available within the city for the construction of new well-built and attractive facilities that will enable the city to effectively compete with its suburban neighbors." Although the Urban Land Institute had, in 1954, called for the adaptive reuse of older downtown

²⁶ Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 13–33; "City Democrats to Push Progress in Community Affairs," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Oct. 8, 1957; Thomas J. Monaghan, inaugural address, in City of Lancaster, *Journal of City Council*, Jan. 6, 1958, 67; Monaghan, annual message, in *Journal of City Council*, Jan. 4, 1960, 62.

buildings, and though the preservation of historic landmarks was key to Bacon's vision for Philadelphia, Cohen believed that only a new, modern downtown and the elimination of blighted neighborhoods would enable the city to withstand the residential and retail exodus to the suburbs.²⁷

As Cohen and the redevelopment authority strove to convince conservative Lancastrians of the merits of their urban revitalization program, they drew upon experts from elsewhere to explain to wary citizens how the process worked and how it would benefit the city. Predictably, as Lancaster had done since the eighteenth century, it turned to the larger metropolis to the east for guidance. In the winter and spring of 1959, the redevelopment authority organized a six-part public forum, "Community Improvement Through Urban Renewal," and five of the six speakers were associated with Philadelphia, including Edmund Bacon, who emphasized the need for long-term, comprehensive planning and public-private partnerships. Another speaker, John P. Robin, an architect of Pittsburgh's Renaissance who was then head of the Old Philadelphia Development Corporation, emphasized the historical importance of the city as a cross-roads and marketplace and assured listeners that despite suburban growth the role of cities as centers of civilization remained. Others on the program included: Drayton Bryant of the Philadelphia Housing Authority, who addressed the painful but essential need to relocate residents displaced by slum clearance; William Wilcox of the Greater Philadelphia Movement, who spoke on the role of citizens in urban renewal; and Francis J. Lammer, executive director of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority. Their words, at least as reported in newspapers, emphasized process rather than a modernist vision, yet the example of Philadelphia's success in urban revitalization clearly inspired Monaghan, Cohen, and other civic leaders.²⁸

In some respects Lancaster's renewal was even more modernist than Philadelphia's. Its first redevelopment plan, prepared by Clifton E. Rodgers

²⁷ Lancaster City Planning Commission, *Lancaster's Central Business District: A Study* (1958), unpaginated introduction and 2, 3, 7, 8; idem., *Lancaster Moves Ahead*, vol. 1 (1959), 55, 61. For the Urban Land Institute's recommendations on adaptive reuse of older structures, see Hal Burton, *The City Fights Back: A Nation-wide Survey of What Cities Are Doing to Keep Pace With Traffic, Zoning, Shifting Population, Smoke, Smog, and Other Problems* (New York, 1954), 115–24.

²⁸ "6-Part Forum Will Explain Urban Renewal," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Dec. 10, 1958; "Robin to Be 1st Speaker on Renewal," *ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1959; "City Renewal Seen Needing a Long View," *ibid.*, Feb. 5, 1959; "City Renewal Expert Maps Path to Take," *ibid.*, Jan. 22, 1959; "Forum Told of Renewal 'Homelessness,'" *ibid.*, Feb. 19, 1959; "5 Problems to Be Met in City Renewal," *ibid.*, Mar. 5, 1959.

in 1959, asserted that the only way to maintain downtown's vitality in a suburban age was "to replace obsolete facilities in keeping with the needs of the community." The plan, *Downtown Lancaster . . . 1980*, addressed the needs only of the eight-block downtown core. It called for the demolition of hundreds of buildings, many of them historic landmarks, to make way for new retail structures and parking. In a vision than was more suburban than urban, downtown would be surrounded by parking garages and traffic would be removed from the principal streets, which would be transformed into pedestrian malls. Government would be relocated away from Penn Square to a new civic center three blocks to the north and replaced by retail, effectively retroactively zoning downtown into areas defined by use. The most striking proposal, for the civic center, demonstrates the degree to which redevelopment embraced a modernist philosophy of design as well as of politics: it consisted of an International Style glass box office building, a strikingly modernist concrete and steel civic center with a sweeping roofline that one planner likened to the outlines of a Conestoga wagon, and a box-like structure to house city offices. If eclecticism and grime-encrusted brick and stone defined the cityscape in the postwar years, Rodgers's plan would have introduced the clean, crisp lines of modernism as the key to a revitalized downtown, though his vision was completely at odds with the historic streetscape.²⁹

Although the plan was well received by the press and the business community, the structure of government made any immediate action unlikely. When Monaghan became mayor in 1958 Lancaster had a commission form of government, a legacy of a Progressive Era reform of the 1920s, with each of the five commissioners responsible for a specific area of municipal administration: one commissioner oversaw the police and fire departments, while other commissioners were responsible for streets and public improvements, parks and public property, and finances. Given this balkanized administrative structure, all of the commissioners had to support the plan for it to move forward expeditiously. Partisan divisions among the commissioners, as well as their jealously guarded territorialism, had in the past slowed the approval process for new initiatives to a snail's pace. With the support of two fellow Democrats on the commission and shrewd administrative appointments who were responsible to the mayor rather than the commissioners, Monaghan effectively consolidated power

²⁹ Clifton E. Rodgers & Associates, *Downtown Lancaster . . . 1980* (Lancaster, PA, 1959), 3, passim; Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 60–67.

in his office and achieved what political scientist John H. Vanderzell has described as "the fundamental ingredients of orderly local administration even within the context of the commission form." But despite the real achievements of Monaghan and the talented new administrators he hired, the public was slower to embrace the modernist vision for Lancaster than were the mayor and the planners. In the election of 1961, Republican George Coe, the owner of a local camera shop, defeated the incumbent Democratic mayor. Coe conceded that Lancaster had to move ahead with urban renewal, though with a less grandiose program than that which Monaghan had adopted, and without "high priced experts from out of town."³⁰

Although Coe had promised to lead Lancaster in a different direction, he retained Cohen as head of the redevelopment authority. In certain respects Coe was a captive of circumstance. Conditions had, if anything, deteriorated; Lancaster's suburbs were growing rapidly, and new strip shopping malls were attracting consumers away from downtown stores. Indeed, between 1958 and 1963 the city's share of total retail dollars spent in Lancaster County dropped from 44 to 28 percent. Moreover, the countywide reassessment of real estate undertaken in 1960 resulted in a dramatic reduction of the appraised value of downtown property: appraisals for buildings on the 100 blocks of North Queen Street alone dropped by \$1.86 million, which would have a long-term impact on the city's financial viability as well as that of the School District of Lancaster. Coe's dilemma was that to be successful as mayor he would have to demonstrate real progress in solving downtown's problems; if he started the redevelopment planning process *de novo*, it would have been highly unlikely, if not impossible, that anything would be built before the next mayoral election.³¹

In the summer of 1962, Coe announced a dramatic \$10 million clear-

³⁰ John H. Vanderzell, "Mayor Joseph H. Moriarty," in *Cases in State and Local Government*, ed. Richard T. Frost (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1961), 28–38. Vanderzell, a professor of government at Franklin & Marshall College who chaired the City Planning Commission during Monaghan's first term as mayor, fictionalized the names of all of the public officials discussed in the article, as well as that of the City of Lancaster, but he clearly was describing events he witnessed firsthand. "Coe Stresses Men and Finances in Platform for 'Better Lancaster,'" *Lancaster New Era*, Sept. 12, 1961; "Coe Asks Aid of Voters to Move Ahead," *ibid.*, Nov. 6, 1961. Monaghan initiated steps that would culminate in a new city charter that created a strong mayor system, with City Council effectively a legislative body, but the new charter did not take effect until 1967.

³¹ Lancaster City Planning Commission, *North Queen Street Study Area Report and Downtown Renewal Project 2 Certification*, Aug. 15, 1962, 2, 7, *passim* (copy in Bureau of Planning, City of Lancaster); Rodgers, *Downtown Lancaster . . . 1980*, 3–4.

ance and construction program for both sides of the 100 block of North Queen Street, just a block north of Penn Square. Describing existing buildings as “old, tired, and worn out,” he assured citizens that success of the project was essential to the city’s future. Although the 1962 plan was less ambitious than the 1959 plan—it included only two blocks rather than the entire downtown core—it was in fact more radical than *Downtown Lancaster*. . . 1980. Whereas the earlier plan called for the preservation of a number of buildings on the two blocks, the 1962 plan was predicated on total clearance. “While some of Lancaster’s history, some of its nostalgia” would be lost, Coe asserted that the new, modern structures that would be built in place of the old would restore downtown prosperity. The city planning commission certified that forty-six of the fifty-five structures on the block were substandard or obsolete and that property values—a key component in the determination of blight—had declined significantly in recent years. The North Queen Street buildings, Cohen stated, had “enough physical and functional deficiencies to justify their clearance” and needed to be replaced with a large parking garage and a modern commercial redevelopment project, including a fourth department store that would anchor downtown and enhance the city’s tax base.³²

The announcement of a specific plan for redevelopment resulted in considerable opposition among the business community and the public at large. Some opponents doubted that downtown could support a proposed fourth department store, others questioned whether the city had the financial resources to bring the plan to fruition, and still others objected to reliance on federal urban redevelopment dollars or doubted whether this was the right plan for Lancaster. Nevertheless, the city forged ahead and in 1963 announced the selection of a Philadelphia firm, National Land and Investment Company, to redevelop the 100 blocks of North Queen Street. But as opposition to the plan became more pronounced, and as National Land proved unable to sign a prospective tenant for the department store site, relations between the city and its out-of-town developer chilled; in January 1965, National Land withdrew from the

³² George B. Coe, “Downtown Renewal Project II,” press release, Aug. 2, 1962, copy in Bureau of Planning, City of Lancaster; “City Unveils \$10 Million Plan to Rebuild 2nd Block of N. Queen,” *Lancaster New Era*, Aug. 2, 1962; “Mayor Calls Plan ‘Giant Step Forward,’” *ibid.*; “How City Rated 46 of 55 Buildings as Sub-Standard,” *ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1962; “Why City Applies ‘Economic Blight’ Tag to Queen St.,” *ibid.*, Aug. 23, 1962; *North Queen Street Study Area Report and Downtown Renewal Project 2 Certification*, Aug. 15, 1962, 2, 7, *passim*.

project.³³

To replace National Land, the redevelopment authority selected a local developer, Second North Queen, Inc. Clinton Clubb, president of a Lancaster construction and engineering firm and a principal in Second North Queen, emphasized that the new developer and investors were local people who would see the project through to a successful conclusion, not out-of-towners motivated solely by profits. Even before Second North Queen had secured any tenants for the proposed construction, on August 2, 1965, Mayor Coe sat in the cab of a demolition crane and steered a wrecking ball at the building that had formerly housed his camera store. Coe believed that a blank slate would demonstrate that the city was serious about its redevelopment program and make it possible to attract the department store anchor essential to the success of the project. As building after building fell and no major tenants committed to Second North Queen, Coe realized that the lack of progress doomed any chance he might have had to win reelection. Monaghan, seeking a new term as mayor, decried the mess Coe had made of downtown redevelopment as well as the "vacant lots" and "broken promises" that were the hallmarks of his administration. Voters returned Monaghan to the mayor's office in the fall 1965 election.³⁴

Shortly after the election, one of the major investors in Second North Queen withdrew from the partnership, and into the breach stepped Goldie Hoffman, a Philadelphia developer long associated with Albert Greenfield. Hoffman brought Victor Gruen to Lancaster to prepare a plan for the 100 North Queen Street blocks. A Viennese-born architect and planner influenced by the Spanish modernist Camillo Sitte and Le Corbusier, Gruen, in the aftermath of World War II, had designed several of the earliest enclosed shopping malls. By the late 1950s he had become critical of suburban sprawl and championed downtown revital-

³³ "A look at Downtown Renewal Project 2," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Aug. 9, 1962; Jerry Sapienza, "What Merchants Think of N. Queen Renewal Program," *Lancaster New Era*, Aug. 20, 1962; idem, "Property Owners' Reaction to Queen Renewal Is Mixed," *ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1962; "N. Queen St. Plan Moving in High Gear," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Aug. 23, 1962; Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 73–81.

³⁴ Interview with Richard H. Barr Jr., Oct. 27, 1992. Barr, a local businessman, had been chair of the city's Architectural Design Review Committee in the mid-1960s; E. Wayne Schlegel, "The Past, the Present, and Future of City Renewal," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, May 4, 1964; "Demolition Starts on N. Queen," *Lancaster New Era*, Aug. 2, 1965; "N. Queen St. 'Wasteland' More a Certainty Than Ever," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Sept. 1, 1965; Monaghan's criticisms of Coe were quoted in "2 Views of Our Renewal," *Lancaster New Era*, Oct. 15, 1965.

ization through lectures, plans, and a book entitled *Heart of Our Cities* (1965). In July 1966, Gruen's associates presented a new site plan for what they called Lancaster Square. The plan called for two new department stores, a hotel, an office building, and smaller retail spaces, all organized around a square, divided by North Queen Street, in the center of the two blocks. Gruen believed that the only way to restore vitality to downtown, which he termed the "tired heart" of the "urban organism," was to apply the lessons he learned in developing suburban malls. New parking garages would occupy the northeast and southwest corners of the block, a modernist office tower with curved corners reminiscent of Lescaze and Howe's Philadelphia Savings Fund Society building would be erected at the southwest corner of the square, and a new hotel would be situated at the northeast, each standing in front of the garages. The department stores would be located at the northwest and southeast corners of the site to anchor the northern end of downtown and transform the retail center into an urban version of Gruen's dumbbell plan for suburban malls. Shoppers would walk between the three older department stores clustered around Penn Square and the new ones at Lancaster Square, passing the smaller retail establishments along North Queen Street, just as they would in a suburban mall. Surrounding, and defining, the new square was a massive, modernist, and unwelcoming three-story concrete structure designed to provide sheltered walkways and stairways for shoppers even as it obscured the facades of all but the four principal buildings at the corners of the square.³⁵

Gruen's plan, which Monaghan and other civic leaders quickly embraced, was predicated on revitalizing downtown Lancaster as the retail center for the county. But just as the modernist plan was inappropriate for a historic city, so was the emphasis on retail the wrong choice in a rapidly suburbanizing economy. Since the announcement of the redevelopment project in 1962, the number of vacancies on the North Queen Street blocks had increased, and the development of a regional shopping center, Park City, two miles from downtown, which was planned,

³⁵ "New Backer Is Found for N. Queen Project," *Lancaster New Era*, Feb. 15, 1966; "2nd North Queen Names Architect," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Apr. 13, 1966; Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities; The Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure* (New York, 1964), 63–72, 83–97. For Gruen, see Alex Wall, *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona, Spain, 2005), and M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia, 2004). See also Gruen, "Urban Renewal," *Appraisal Journal* 24 (Jan. 1956): 23–29, copy in the Victor Gruen Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. For a more complete analysis of Gruen's plan, see Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 91–96.

approved, and built in lockstep with Lancaster Square, competed with North Queen Street both for retail tenants and shoppers.³⁶

Monaghan managed to get some of the east side of North Queen Street built—a stripped-down brick and limestone version of the Beaux Arts classical Hotel Brunswick that had stood opposite the train station, as well as a new Hess's department store, which commentators noted was the first new downtown department store erected in the state since 1945, and a movie theater. Monaghan must have been pleased with this progress, but the west block remained undeveloped. Although Coe had demolished the buildings, Monaghan became identified with what many residents described as "our hole in the ground." The smaller storefronts largely remained vacant, and the Hess's store closed only twenty-eight months after it opened. Philip Berman, president of Hess's, attributed its closing to a lack of progress in attracting other stores to Lancaster Square. But in a press release announcing the closing he conceded that the company would "review plans for additional Hess's suburban convenience stores, which have proved so successful." In the race for retail ascendancy, downtown simply could not compete with suburban malls. Predicated on anchoring downtown's retail economy, Lancaster Square was the wrong solution for what ailed the city.³⁷

The failure to redevelop the west block of North Queen Street doomed Monaghan's political career, and in November 1973 he was defeated by Republican Richard Scott. Corporate Lancaster embraced Scott, and National Central Bank and the Armstrong Cork Company finally erected bland modernist brick and glass office buildings on the site—but only after demolition of the three-story concrete superstructure on the west block that had become a symbol of all that had gone wrong with downtown redevelopment. These office buildings brought workers and potential consumers to Lancaster Square, but only after the vision of a downtown retail center on the site had proved to be illusory.³⁸

In addition to the North Queen Street project and improvements to Penn Square, Lancaster's redevelopment authority also undertook an

³⁶ David Schuyler, "Lancaster Square and Park City: Reflections on Downtown Renewal and Suburbanization," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 104 (2002): 114–33.

³⁷ Charles H. Kessler, "Hess's Closing Store Here Today," and Jack Moore, "Officials Dismayed by Closing," *Lancaster New Era*, Aug. 27, 1973; "Hess's Closing and the City's Future," *ibid.*, Aug. 28, 1973; Charles Shaw, "Downtown Renewal Set Back," *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*, Aug. 28, 1973; Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 2, 103–14.

³⁸ Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 114–19.

ambitious residential renewal program. It demolished more than nine hundred buildings in the southeast quadrant of the city, paved miles of streets, installed sidewalks and curbs, and built public housing in the hope of eradicating the blight that characterized that neighborhood. But as was true in Philadelphia, determined white opposition to scattered-site low-income housing resulted in the concentration of public housing in areas where racial minorities already lived, a policy of containment historians such as Arnold Hirsch, Thomas Sugrue, and Raymond Mohl have described in other cities. Moreover, the extent of demolition destabilized the city's historic African American community, and a rapidly growing Hispanic population competed with blacks for decent places to live in a community that was still largely segregated. Just as the North Queen Street project failed to revitalize the city's retail economy, so did residential renewal fail to address adequately the housing needs of the city's minorities.³⁹

* * *

The process and the results of urban redevelopment in Philadelphia and Lancaster have obvious parallels but also significant differences. Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code designates Philadelphia as a first-class city, Lancaster a third-class city. The municipalities have different taxing powers and different administrative structures. Both emerged from decades of Republican rule with a younger generation of Democratic leaders determined to use modern architecture and planning to remake downtown as an attractive place to work, shop, and socialize in an era of suburban growth.

Lancaster obviously looked to Philadelphia as it launched its war on blight both in the downtown retail area and in residential neighborhoods. But there were differences. Philadelphia's redevelopment program succeeded in the Penn Center project as well as in Society Hill (and later Market Street East), whereas it is difficult to point to anything comparable in Lancaster. Moreover, in Philadelphia a new political culture took

³⁹ Information presented in this paragraph is explored fully in Schuyler, *City Transformed*, 123–81. See also Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; and Raymond A. Mohl, "Making the Second Ghetto in Metropolitan Miami, 1940–1960," *Journal of Urban History* 21 (1995): 395–427. The other major postwar urban redevelopment program in Pennsylvania is that of Pittsburgh, which is carefully chronicled in chapter 6 of Lubove's *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh*, "The Pittsburgh Renaissance: An Experiment in Public Paternalism."

shape, one that, under Clark and Dilworth in the 1950s, emphasized expertise instead of the clubhouse corruption born of decades of Republican rule. Yet, in Lancaster a longstanding conservative political culture and the absence of a powerful progrowth coalition constrained what Monaghan and the planners hoped to accomplish. But perhaps most important, Philadelphia had the resources—municipal finances, local developers, and a strong political leadership—to bring major projects to fruition, while Lancaster had to rely on developers from Philadelphia and never achieved the consensus that would enable elected officials to modernize their city. In Philadelphia, the result was the gleaming glass facade of Penn Center, and in Lancaster the brutalist concrete of Victor Gruen's Lancaster Square.

However, if Philadelphia and Lancaster both embraced strikingly modern plans to bring about downtown revitalization, neither the modernist vision nor the reformist political culture was able to eliminate blight in residential neighborhoods and improve housing for racial minorities. Just as the clearance of the lower Hill District destabilized Pittsburgh's African American neighborhoods and tarnished the Golden Triangle, residential renewal in postwar Philadelphia resulted in wholesale housing demolition and the massive uprooting of thousands of black families. Saving downtown, making it safe for white middle-class women and competitive with the new suburban malls, meant excising the squalid late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century courts and bandbox housing surrounding the urban core. Despite the historic preservation sensitivity of Bacon and Kahn's East Poplar and Society Hill developments, urban renewal ultimately devastated much of the city's old row-house residential fabric. Similarly, in Lancaster residential renewal focused more on eliminating blight than on providing adequate housing for the poor, especially racial minorities. The sterile public housing erected in both cities, as elsewhere, gave residential renewal its ignominious face. The emergence of "hypersegregation," in Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's term, as well as the concentrations of poverty that followed, together with federal policies that largely restricted a suburban home to whites, remain a monument to the failure of the new modern politics to achieve scattered-site low-income housing and to overcome the resistance to integration that characterized cities in the north as well as the south. These failures inspired antirenewal jeremiads from the likes of Jane Jacobs, Martin Anderson, and Herbert Gans, among others. Their views spanned the

political spectrum, and they denounced what they considered to be a deeply flawed national urban policy as well as the modernist vision for the revitalized cityscape. They also decried the inability of the modern political culture to enhance the quality of life in the nation's cities.⁴⁰

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⁴⁰ Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).