WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT URBAN EXCELLENCE?

The Rudy Bruner Award is a search for urban excellence. It seeks to identify and reward excellent urban places, and to serve as a forum for debating urban issues and the nature of urban excellence. So, what did we learn about urban excellence in this round of the Award through reviewing ninety-three submissions, visiting five finalists, and selecting two winners?

REBUILDING COMMUNITIES

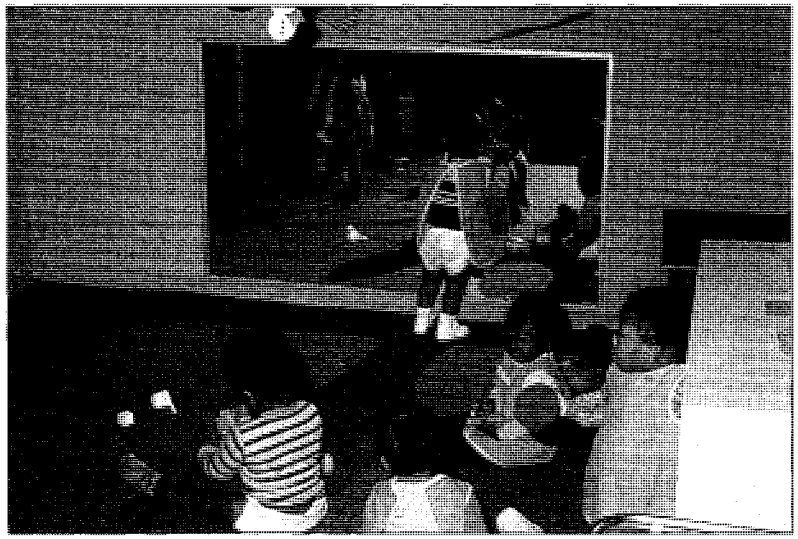
The theme that emerged from this year's award, **rebuilding communities**, is demonstrated in varying ways by all of the finalists and certainly the two winners. The often recited litany of urban ills — human distress, poverty, crime, oppression, homelessness, physical deterioration — too often lead to a wringing of hands and abandonment of the locus of these problems by flight to the suburbs. How refreshing, then, are the stories from the finalists and winners about how these ills are being overcome.

Community is not defined by nostalgia for a small town way of life or colorful immigrant neighborhoods. Community is about people working together to make positive things happen where they live — things they could not do on their own. The two winners exemplify situations where local residents and leaders have come together to turn around neighborhoods devastated by neglect, disinvestment, mismanagement and, in the case of Newark, physical destruction from the 1967 riot.

In both these areas, the level of deterioration was extreme, pessimism was rampant, and the obstacles to be overcome were daunting. Newark's Central Ward looked as though it had been bombed. At the old Columbia Point housing project, only about 350 of 1,500 units were occupied by public housing tenants and many of the empty units were boarded up; some occupied as drug dens.

In Newark, **New Community Corporation** took a long term perspective on community development. Msgr. Linder asked community leaders for a twenty year commitment to rebuilding. NCC started small and always included the residents as key decision makers to ensure responsiveness to their needs. What brought back a sense of community in this area is the way New Community has rewoven the urban fabric through physical rebuilding, housing, jobs, a supermarket, safety and security, day care, health care, and educational programs. Poor people who lived there before now have hope and opportunity.

At **Harbor Point**, the residents organized themselves and, as they became experienced, took charge. They refused to allow a patch-up job, finding a private developer with whom they could work as equal partners and together built a complete new community where the devastated housing project had stood. Whatever tensions may arise from people of different incomes and backgrounds living together are more than compensated for by the joys of living in a safe neighborhood, sharing amenities and solving problems together peacefully and effectively.



At **Betts-Longworth**, the community had been devastated by years of successive misguided government programs — from highway construction to urban renewal to historic preservation efforts. But, what was left of the community refused to give up and helped to demonstrate the quality of community that could be achieved through effective preservation. In this case, enlightened planners and city officials finally put together a program that worked for the residents and in the interests of rebuilding. A mixed income community is re-emerging from an area that came close to being leveled.

In San Francisco, the number of homeless people had been growing and the newspapers were reporting stories about people dying in the streets on cold nights. The homeless are a symbol of a society in distress and unable to provide for its poorest members. While the **Beyond Homelessness** program has not solved the problem, it has addressed it comprehensively and provided many services that were absent or sorely inadequate.

The **Park at Post Office Square**, in an otherwise vibrant downtown commercial district, replaced an ugly and dangerous parking structure with a beautiful park that attracts office workers and contributes a focus to the area. Downtown areas are too often unattractive, unpleasant, crime ridden places. Here, a real contribution is made toward reversing these trends.

A Comprehensive Approach: Providing Services, Not Just Buildings

Fragmentation of analysis and piecemeal provision of services has been a tremendous impediment to solving urban problems. Programs tend to address a single issue or problem rather than taking a holistic approach. This is partly an artifact of our specialized, bureaucratic and technocratic society which has an agency and a program for each ill. Thus, a department of housing is concerned with shelter, transportation with getting from home to work or school. Health, education, welfare, labor and commerce all are separate. But an individual or a community that has a problem in one of these areas is likely to face problems in several of them — and they are, in fact, closely interrelated. A person who doesn't have education and skills probably can't get a job, can't afford decent housing, is likely to be on public assistance, doesn't eat correctly, is more likely to be physically ill or suffer mental problems, is less likely to be able to care adequately for his or her children, and so forth in an ever lowering spiral.

While this specialization of government programs is understandable to some extent in a society of experts, it greatly hampers addressing these multi-faceted and multi-dimensional problems. The notion of dealing in a more holistic way with the plethora of problems an individual faces, perhaps overlapping many of these disciplines, has not generally been taken very seriously (though it is interesting to note that the Clinton administration proposes such an approach through its program of creating 110 Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities).

One powerful idea that contributes to seeing problems and solutions holistically, is that of focusing on the individual, community or place — rather than on the single issue. With significant community input, a local organization can stay close to the needs of its people. New Community Corporation, Harbor Point, and Beyond Homelessness are particularly good examples of this kind of approach.

New Community Corporation started as a community development corporation (CDC), which it still is — though now it is also much more. The initial focus was on rebuilding on burned out sites and providing shelter for families and senior citizens. Soon after its formation, however, NCC began to blossom into a service provider — always responding to needs of its community. Among its first ventures was daycare, essential to poor people so they can go to work or to school. In response to the level of need in the area and the lack of other providers, NCC's Babyland has become the largest network of daycare facilities in New Jersey. Similarly, security was a major need that was not being responded to by civic authorities. Rather than pay a private security company, NCC formed its own, providing jobs for residents at the same time. NCC has also responded to needs for job placement and training, education, postal services, and retail shopping. While it is still building housing, leaders see its most important challenge and contribution to be in job and wealth creation — because employed people can take care of many of their own needs.

Harbor Point also had a focus on people, not just buildings. The tenants' association was very clear that it would not be workable simply to mix income levels — services were needed, especially by those in subsidized units. The initial contacts between the tenants and the developer were through Dave Connelly, a private, for-profit social service provider whose organization continues to provide important services. There is a community health center, a daycare facility, and a youth center for use of all residents. The ability to refer a resident to services provided on site has been important to the success of the mixed income model. The implementation of this continuum of services grew out of an impressive process. Connelly and his group, working with the tenants' association, developed a planning matrix of social service, health and educational needs by age group. Most importantly, they made a commitment to providing services to address all of the needs rated as important.

Beyond Homelessness is based on the Beyond Shelter plan. The plan is a comprehensive approach to the problem of homelessness, looking at its many manifestations and providing services as well as facilities for people in many situations and with many kinds of needs — from drop in assistance to transitional housing.

In reviewing the initial set of ninty-three submissions for the award,

we were struck by the number of projects that combined services with facilities. These included several housing projects, another homeless project and a sheltered living facility for people with AIDS.

ADDRESSING CRITICAL URBAN PROBLEMS

Each of the finalists is excellent in many ways. This made the Selection Committee's task of picking a winner extremely challenging. In its winnowing process, two features stood out as "tests" for considering a project as winner:

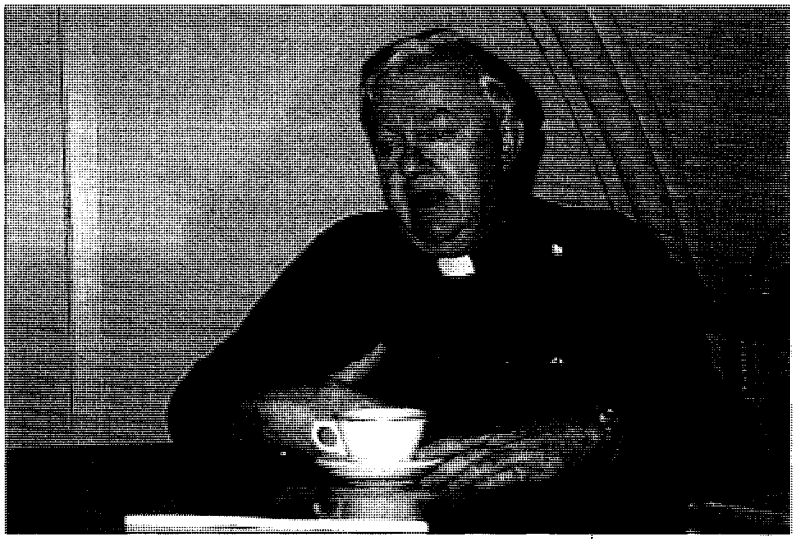
- Did the project address critical urban and social issues?
- Had the city, the project, or its participants helped to create the problems that it addressed?

Betts-Longworth. The Selection Committee recognized that historic preservation and neighborhood rebuilding are key urban issues. Their concern with this project was that, no matter how good a job the current city administration was doing, they still bore at least

some responsibility for turning this district into the huge problem that it had become. Deterioration of the West End was exacerbated by ramming an interstate highway through it, but in Betts-Longworth, earlier city programs for renewal and preservation had failed and contributed to the loss of historic buildings and the failure of some small, minority contractors (in a show of good faith, the city did reimburse some of their claims). Some participants, however, felt that the city's efforts to make good on a string of past failures made it even more, not less, deserving of recognition.

Beyond Homelessness addresses an issue that is indisputably crucial to today's cities and presents an approach to it that is clearly meritorious. However, while the city has more recently passed an ordinance that prohibits conversion of residence hotels to tourist use, San Francisco, like many other cities, greatly contributed to the growth of its homeless population by allowing many single room occupancy hotels and other lower cost housing to be converted to other uses or to be torn down to make way for office and commercial development. Some areas of low cost housing were wiped out wholesale in urban renewal projects (e.g., South of Market and the convention center). On balance, the Selection Committee referred to its experience of San Francisco, with the sense of homeless people on every street corner, and felt that the problem is too intractable, that the current administration had not carried the plan forward, and that the projects represented too small an impact to merit the award.

The Selection Committee recognized that the **Park at Post Office Square** was excellent in every way: from process, to design, to management. The creation of a beautiful and valued urban open space, the improvement of traffic and orientation, and all this using private capital certainly represented a major contribution to the public good. It was not named as a winner because of the extreme importance the Selection Committee placed on the theme of rebuilding devastated communities. Though the committee felt that Post Office Square was both important and without flaw, it was not seen as being as socially essential as the winners. The winners, by contrast, though not flawless, both addressed critical issues in an outstanding way and with large scale impact.



SIMEON BRUNER

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE: PERSISTENCE IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS

Each of the projects dealt with problems whose solutions appeared "impossible" in some way: politically, socially, or financially. They required vision and persistence well beyond what can normally be expected.

Harbor Point was more than two-thirds abandoned, had a terrible image and reputation, a tenants group with no money, no development experience or political clout, an isolated location, and a problem site with poor soils. How could it be rebuilt into a viable, mixed race, mixed income neighborhood? To do so took tremendous vision and persistence on the part of the tenant group. Offered $10 million by HUD to fix the place up, they decided that this would be a band-aid approach. They demanded — and got — to team up with a private, for-profit developer who worked with them for years to get approval of the project the team wanted. The developer-tenant partnership still works together on solving day-to-day problems and managing the community.

New Community Corporation. Newark — rated by some quality of life surveys to be "the worst city in the U.S." — was in ashes; what could be done? Would major actors make a 20 year commitment to rebuilding — and follow through? With strong leadership, intense community participation, and an initial strategy of tackling one project at a time, the group succeeded in building experience, a reputation, and a critical mass of successes — and has turned this neighborhood around. One measure of this success is the growth in private investment in surrounding areas, which have recently sprouted owner-occupied townhomes where none would have dared build them before.

To some extent, New Community Corporation stepped in to fill a void left by what could be described as a dysfunctional city government. NCC provided services that would normally be offered by a city but were largely lacking in the Central Ward, including social services, planning, housing, security, and trash removal. NCC became almost a "surrogate city" for this piece of the urban fabric.

The Park at Post Office Square did not own its future site and the garage operator who had it tied up under lease had refused to sell it to several major prospects (including the Federal Reserve Bank), while the city was not anxious to take it by eminent domain. No one knew of a precedent for a public park developed with private resources and supported by revenue from a garage. But the leaders made a commitment and persisted until they prevailed. The turning points were gaining approval of their public corporation with eminent domain powers and using those powers as a "stick" while they "talked softly" and concluded the deal to buy out the garage operator.

Who at **Betts-Longworth** would believe that the city — whose failure in past efforts had actually contributed to devastating the neighborhood — could finally bring off a quality development in the area and save most of what was left of the historic building stock? But, acting in good faith, the city came up with the "Land Rush/Wagon Train" strategy, got the banks to go along, convinced the small developers that the program would work — and it did. Now Betts-Longworth is a sought after neighborhood close to downtown.

Beyond Homelessness addresses what may be the most intractable problem in urban America, contributed to by a shrinking stock of low cost housing, lack of community mental health services, and an economy in recession. While Beyond Homelessness hasn't solved the problem — there are still many (perhaps more) homeless people on the streets — it has addressed it comprehensively, with projects for each step in the process of moving off the streets. This required getting a wide range of public and private social service providers, community developers, city agencies, and homeless advocates all pulling in the same direction — a notable achievement in a field that takes Herculean efforts just to keep it from deteriorating further.

BALANCING LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

Several of the finalists had strong leaders: people with vision and charisma who could set a direction and bring people and institutions along to make things happen. Strong leadership also carries a degree of risk, however. If a charismatic leader is too strong, he or she may not be inclined to build a capable organization or involve constituents to the degree necessary to achieve buy in and support. Often, if the leader stumbles or moves on, a crisis is generated and sometimes the project collapses. Thus, balancing leadership and participation is critical for long term success.

For **New Community Corporation**, Msgr. Linder provided vision and encouragement for 25 years and Mary Smith led the foundation and growth of the Babyland child care services. Linder, Smith and others have grown an organization with many capable staff and managers. As important, they have always nurtured strong community involvement and participation (e.g., from tenants) in designing and managing their projects. Their strategic plan employs executive mentors drawn from the new board of directors and assigned to each upper manager at NCC as well as a major emphasis on management staff development in order to ensure continuity. This plan will be especially important when, eventually, Msgr. Linder is no longer available.

While Joe Corcoran, head of the developer team at **Harbor Point**, brought a vision of mixed race, mixed income communities, equally impressive leadership developed within the tenants association, from members such as Ruby Jaundoo and Eta Johnson. Corcoran clearly believed in partnership with the tenants as the only way to make such a project work; this is evidenced by the arrangements his

firm made with them. The tenants, on their side, were already highly organized and effective, having fought for everything they had achieved up to that time. They became even more capable as they faced and met the challenges of planning, building and managing their project.

The **Park at Post Office Square** benefited from the strong leadership of Norman Leventhal (chairman) and Bob Weinberg (president). Leventhal brought the vision to conceive of the project and the connections to muster support at high levels in the city and business communities. Weinberg brought the ability to get things done. For a private project with strong leaders, there was also a major commitment to participation of community groups. While this was partly done out of political savvy, it was also based on a belief in meaningful participation as a path to excellence.

Beyond Homelessness grew from the commitment of then-mayor Art Agnos to address this problem. He activated a multi-dimensional task force of city agencies, homeless advocates, social service providers and others and gained input from many sides. He was prepared to direct considerable resources toward eradicating homelessness and took major steps in that direction. Some say he made too great a commitment to this problem, treating it as his "crusade" and failing to adequately broaden its base of support. It was perceived as being "his plan" and, hence of less immediacy to the next mayor (Frank Jordan), though he has continued the projects that were already underway, he has not increased resources in proportion to the growth of the problem. However, in considering the individual projects, there was considerable participation in their planning and design.

Leadership at **Betts-Longworth** has come from residents' groups and preservationists as well as the city, though, in recent developments, the city appears to have assumed the key role. In part, this is due to the level of devastation which eliminated all but the most stalwart residents. City-conceived plans for the Land Rush and Wagon Train, as well as the influx of city funds, ultimately turned the district around. Now it will be up to resident groups to keep it viable. The city, in the meantime, wants to move on to preserve and rehab other neighborhoods, although the initiative appears to come from the city more than the communities.

EFFECTIVE, ON-GOING MANAGEMENT

However excellent a place may be as developed, it requires an ongoing process of management to keep it that way — or to reinvent it in relation to evolving challenges. In projects that evolved with strong leadership or with broad based participation (or both) the issue revolves around how to translate those forces into day to day monitoring and decision making. Good planners (who need vision and perhaps charisma) may or may not be good managers. New people and perhaps new or modified organizational structures may be needed.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of ongoing management is the **Park at Post Office Square**. Run by the Friends of Post Office Square and with a substantial budget, great attention is paid to every detail of operations, from clearing sidewalks to ensuring an attractive menu and pricing at the food concession. While some services are provided directly (such as gardening maintenance at the park) others are contracted, but with clear performance requirements and careful monitoring (such as food service and garage operations). Not only are management policies very well conceived, they are very effectively carried out, as confirmed by the levels of cleanliness and maintenance evident throughout the park and garage.

At **Harbor Point**, which grew out of a partnership between the developer and the tenants, the challenge has been for the tenants to stay involved. Since the tenants' association started and grew by facing management problems at the former public housing project, they were well equipped to address similar issues in the new development. The organization of the Harbor Point Apartment Company as an equal partnership between the developers and the community task force (tenants) ensures tenant involvement in and responsibility for management. The company has continued involvement in all aspects of running the facilities, though they choose to contract out certain specific services.

New Community Corporation, with twenty-five years of experience of developing and running projects, has assumed a major role in management. Seeing operations and services as a source of both tenant satisfaction and jobs, NCC has become a major management company. For example, it runs its own security service, providing hundreds of jobs.

For **Beyond Homelessness**, ongoing management and services are provided by the entities which run each of the projects. These range from CDCs (such as Chinese Community Housing) to church affiliated groups (St. Vincent de Paul) to private non-profit social service agencies (Chemical Awareness and Treatment Services).

Every community developer must be able to understand and maneuver through the highly technical worlds of finance, design and development (as well as the more traditional realms of community organizing and social services). The winners and finalists showed the ability to take on these disciplines, learn their language, and work with experts to make projects successful.

THE ROLE OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

To do a project well, a great deal of knowledge and expertise is needed. This may include knowing how to maneuver through the political process, how to develop financial support or satisfy funding agencies, and how to master planning, design and construction. Sometimes a community group develops this expertise itself, though it may take them quite a while and a lot of mistakes and hard knocks along the way. Each of the finalists and winners took a different approach to developing and using technical expertise.

The **Park at Post Office Square** availed itself of top experts for every part of its undertaking. This was made possible by the substantial corporate resources they had available and grew out of the leaders' commitment to quality and doing the best possible job. Not only did they hire outstanding design firms such as Skidmore Owings and Merrill, but they also selected the best talent for landscape design and public art through competitions. In addition, they had several oversight committees which made local expertise available for free on an advisory basis. These included committees on the park, the garage, and technical aspects of construction.

Harbor Point also used teams of outstanding professionals including Goody Clancy architects and Carol Johnson landscape architect. Perhaps to balance the power of the developer's experts, the tenants' group also had an architectural advisor, Communitas (Antonio di Mambro). While the developer's designers were committed to being sensitive to user needs, having their own expert architectural advisor allowed the tenants to feel fully represented. And, of course, by virtue of teaming up with a professional developer (Corcoran Mullin Jennison), the team gained invaluable expertise in finance, construction, and marketing.

Starting out humbly, **New Community Corporation** has grown through experience on dozens of projects to have tremendous expertise as a community developer. It has tremendous capabilities in community organization, political processes, planning, developing funding sources, construction, management, and business operations. Recognizing the need to address key design problems, NCC was among the first clients to employ Oscar Newman, an architect who developed the concept of defensible space. NCC continues to find ways to make expertise available in creative ways. The new NCC Foundation has a program where executives on the board mentor NCC managers and share their experience.

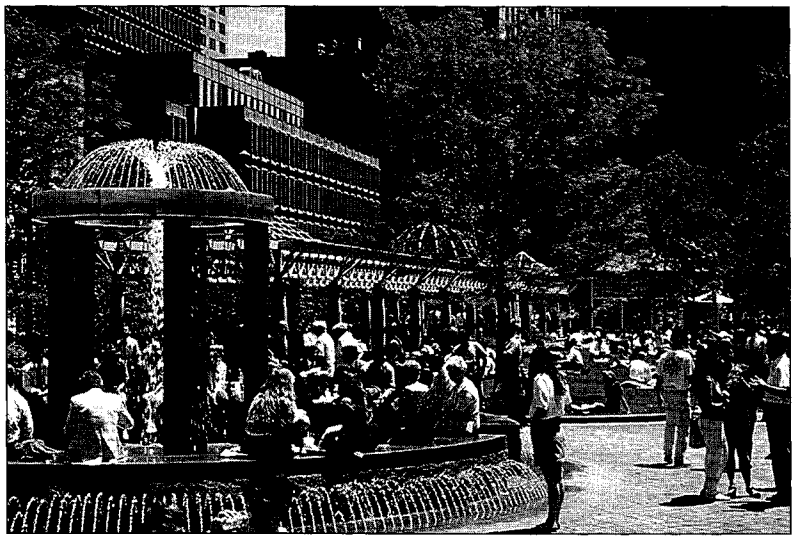
At **Betts-Longworth**, planners realized that new, small scale developers could easily fail without technical and financial support. The city had the sound idea of making expertise and advice about historic renovation, building codes and financing available to small, sometimes inexperienced developers, thus contributing to the success and growth in capability of this group. They made available city personnel and consultants, and arranged contacts with bankers, to provide the needed assistance.

LEVERAGING SCARCE RESOURCES THROUGH IMAGINATIVE USE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS

Several of this round's projects take unconventional and imaginative approaches to urban development. While it is not unusual for a non-profit developer to cobble together many sources of funding, and we hear more and more about public-private partnerships, there are several examples here of for-profit entities making unusual contributions and playing unusual roles.

While the **Park at Post Office Square** is a big ticket project with major corporate sponsorship, many aspects of its financing scheme show the clever leveraging of resources. When the deal was struck to buy out the leaseholder of the old garage, part of the compensation was achieved through allowing him to raise parking fees for a period, in effect charging garage users for site acquisition. This was

GOODY-CLANCY ARCHITECTS



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the first step in a process that will eventually lead to the new garage subsidizing not only its park, but neighborhood parks as well. Another aspect of this model which might be replicated in dense urban cores is having the surrounding office building owners and tenants buy the rights to parking spaces in the garage. Most of the equity for the project was raised in this way. The whole notion of private development of an effectively public urban park is unprecedented — and particularly welcome in an era when government is having more difficulty finding resources for this type of project.

New Community Corporation has made use of many public and private funding arrangements, but prefers to be as independent as it can. In recent years, it has entered into profit making businesses, using the profits as seed money for projects that do not fit into traditionally funded categories. It opened a Pathmark supermarket of which it is co-owner, as well as several wholly-owned ventures. Every venture retains important social goals in terms, for example, of offering better quality and value food or creating jobs for local residents.

At **Harbor Point**, a for-profit developer teamed up with the tenants in an equal partnership. Why? Because he thought that this was the only way to make the project work. This unconventional arrangement appears to be working for management and operating profits, when they are achieved, will be split — with the tenants group using its share to improve already intensive services. The project also benefited from a large inflow of public funding, a large slice of which was arranged by the state housing finance authority which was willing to take on some of the risk because of the importance it attributed to the project. Syndication of tax writeoffs also played a major role.

Betts-Longworth faced the challenge of getting small entrepreneurs together with conservative banks in a district where failure had become chronic. In order to minimize the risk to all parties, the city asked several banks to form a consortium, creating a pool of funds sufficient to get a critical mass of buildings rehabilitated. The city gave grants and helped arrange tax preferences for small developers — whom they also supported with technical expertise. The "Wagon Train" public relations campaign painted an appropriate image of banding together in the face of adverse conditions and all moving forward together.

ACHIEVING QUALITY IN URBAN PLACES

Quality may seem like an obvious attribute of excellence, but it is often elusive — even when it is pursued. With projects that must leverage scarce resources, as all these have had to do, quality may be even harder to achieve. What stands out in the finalists and winners is the importance of the commitment to the pursuit of quality, how difficult it can be to achieve, how rewarding when achieved, and how its lack is felt if it is not attained.

Quality is the hallmark of every aspect of the **Park at Post Office Square**, in design, construction and operations. They wanted the best project that could be achieved — and they got it — by hiring the best consultants, by getting community people involved who recognized quality, and by visiting similar projects and learning about what really mattered and what really worked. The park and pubic art projects are beautiful and highly appreciated. Attention to detail permeates every aspect of the park and the garage, from plant selection and placement to lighting design, from security to maintenance.

Harbor Point replaced a project conceived around outmoded planning concepts and constructed to bare minimum standards with one of considerable quality, where it is impossible to distinguish a unit occupied by subsidized tenants from those at market rate. The commitment to quality was based on a philosophy which holds that quality is deserved by public housing tenants and needed to attract and retain market rate tenants. However, the level of quality achieved at Harbor Point was won in continuous battles with regulatory agencies, who put many impediments in the way. Many of the materials at Harbor Point are considered to be serious compromises by the designers, who argued for more durable selections (for example, the use of painted siding rather than something that would require less maintenance).

New Community Corporation holds to a similar philosophy, that "the poor deserve quality services". This can be seen at their Pathmark Supermarket where high quality food and service are paramount. Similarly, Babyland provides excellent child care in well designed facilities. However, the quality of design of NCC projects varies significantly. Some are well designed and constructed, while others suffer in terms of delivering quality to the

tenants. While the quality of services is quite high, the same level of attention has not always been paid to physical design. Though the Selection Committee was effusive in praising NCC's work in most areas, it took care to note that the poor also deserved beauty and good design — but found it distinctly lacking in some of the NCC housing projects.

At **Betts-Longworth**, one objective was to retain a high level of quality in the historical rehabilitations. However, this was compromised to a significant degree by the overriding aim of getting a critical mass of projects completed. In order to assist small developers with marginally viable projects, the city refrained from enforcing strict rehabilitation standards, some of which would have cost added money (e.g., insisting on the use of historical materials and details) and the quality of some of the projects suffers for it. A higher level is achieved in new construction at Longworth Square, where the city brought in a well qualified builder from the suburbs.

Some of the projects comprising **Beyond Homelessness** were very well designed, providing a high level of quality of space, design and finishes to a group that is not usually accorded it. The McMillan

Drop In Center is a good example, where space is arranged with great sensitivity to a variety of often conflicting requirements and the colors, shapes and materials are cheerful, stimulating and clearly non-institutional.

Thus, the provision of quality design and services is a hallmark of excellent urban places — and, where it is lacking, even generally excellent places are less than they would otherwise have been.

CONCLUSION

The 1993 Rudy Bruner Award sought and found projects that contribute powerfully to bettering life for city dwellers, focusing on exemplary solutions to the problems of deteriorating communities.

These problems are widespread; hardly any metropolitan area has been able to overcome them entirely or without enormous struggle. On the other hand, the texture and character of the problems are unique in each location — people, places, history and geography vary greatly. What communities share is the need to begin the process of rebuilding. They must find local leadership, carefully define their problems and goals, use the local and national resources they find available, and fashion unique and innovative solutions that respond to their special conditions and needs.

While partisan politics are found everywhere, the winning projects succeeded in gaining broad ownership and support, well beyond traditional party allegiances. Solutions made use of government programs and funding, but did not rely on them entirely. All the projects incorporated private and independent initiatives in design and financing. Though the featured projects are not blueprints to be copied in other communities, they provide models in which other communities may find elements of value.

While it may still take great vision, herculean effort, and tremendous persistence to rebuild a community, we hope that leaders at all levels will contribute toward creating an environment where excellence in community reconstruction can be nurtured, where barriers to success can be removed or diminished. Only in this way will the examples of excellence proliferate to the extent that we can feel that, as a nation, we are coming to grips with rebuilding our cities and the lives of our city dwellers.

Founded in 1986, the *Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment* searches for and celebrates excellent urban places. This book presents the lessons we learned from the five 1993 finalists — all promising examples of urban excellence. These projects have transformed their communities so well, and on such a significant scale, that their accomplishments are nothing less than astounding — especially in contrast to the continual stream of pessimistic reports we all hear about cities. They are:

Harbor Point
Boston, Massachusetts

New Community Corporation
Newark, New Jersey

Betts-Longworth Historic District
Cincinnati, Ohio

Beyond Homelessness
San Francisco, California

The Park at Post Office Square
Boston, Massachusetts

The 1993 *Rudy Bruner Award*, and its $50,000 prize, went to two projects. New Community Corporation (NCC) was honored for constructing an alternative city within Newark, New Jersey. Having risen from the ashes of the 1967 riots, NCC houses and employs thousands, providing facilities for children, seniors, the sick, and the homeless. NCC delivers necessities that many other communities take for granted, such as a supermarket offering fresh food at reasonable prices.

The other winning project is in Boston, where Harbor Point — a mixed income, mixed race community — has been created from a dangerous 1950s public housing project. The partnership that built and runs it, a joint venture between public housing tenants and a developer, is a microcosm of the community that works together to make Harbor Point home.

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