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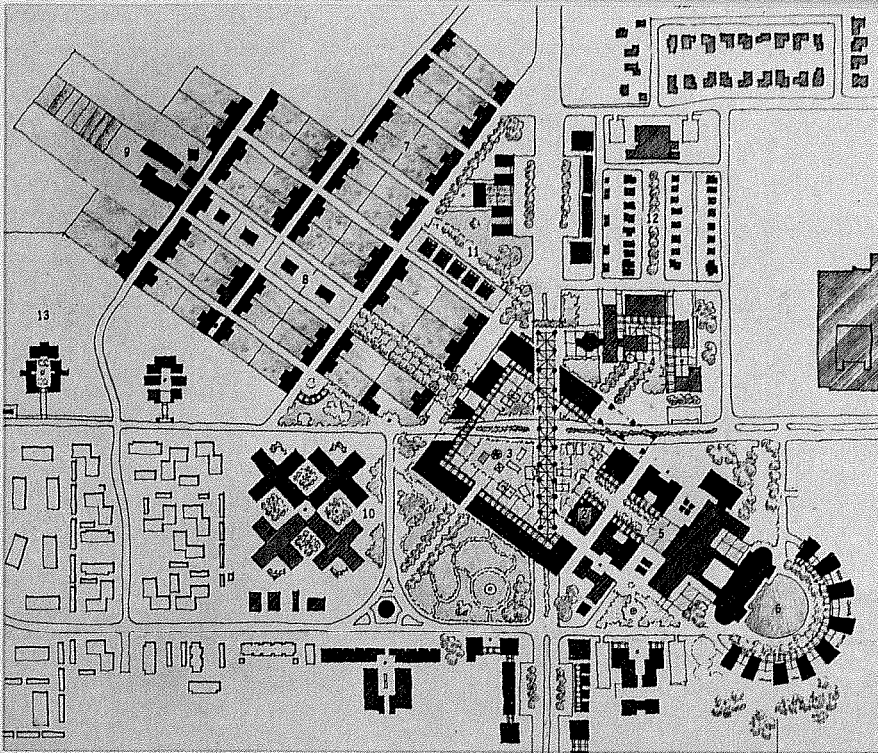
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The Growing Suburban Edge should be developed to introduce the idea of the contemporary "trading post." A hard enclosure at the crossing of two roads would create a market place and meeting place.

Surrounding areas would provide necessary ingredients for a healthy rural economy. Encourage office headquarters and light manufacturing to locate in this area. Limit growth and define development boundaries. Preserve land for agriculture and large-scale urban recycling enterprises. Promote well-measured variety of building types; including:

- Farmettes, ten acres of land owned and worked by five to ten families living in a compound located on the land.
- Orchard housing, an alternative or addition to ill-defined suburban space patterns and monotonous housing types.

—Cekic, Cormier, DeGrazia, Hubbel, Letunic, Mann

Let Milwaukee Be Milwaukee

Cynthia Weese

The competition recognized that there are definite characteristics uniting certain urban areas. The exploration in this case was of the problems and possibilities inherent in late nineteenth-century, mid-sized industrial cities such as Milwaukee, Cleveland, Rochester, St. Louis and Minneapolis.

These cities do not have the lively urban qualities of New York, Chicago, or San Francisco, nor are they as amorphous and spread out as southern and western metropolitan areas; they have a certain rather pleasant density, particularly in their older residential areas. They exist because of a natural feature, generally water, which made their industrial growth possible, and a human-made feature, railroads, which carried their products to markets. The strong work ethic of the immigrant populations still exists and is celebrated. In the past 30 years the industrial base has diminished and in some cases has been replaced with a service and information economy.

The most creative thoughts came in proposals for the older residential area, a district where the single family house on the 50-foot lot prevails and there are few apartment buildings or town houses. The competitors looked at the problems with fresh eyes, possibly because the elements of the existing neigh-

borhood—housing, commercial, industrial and a park with a stream—were an interesting and unusual mix, and possibly because these issues have seldom been worked with on an area-wide basis.

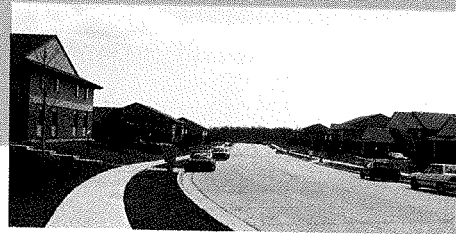
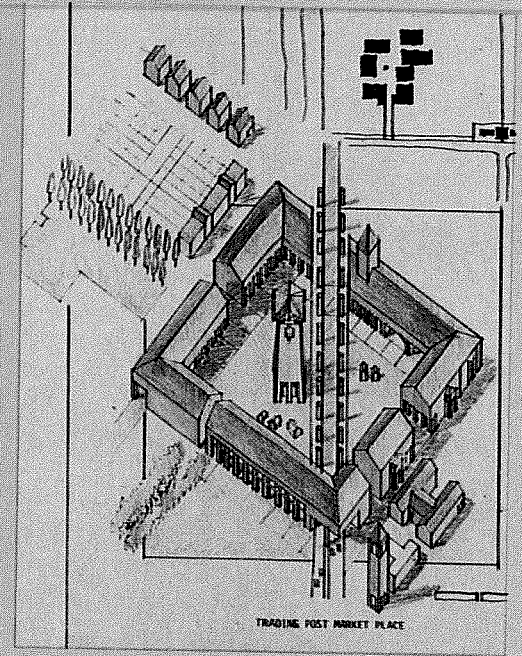
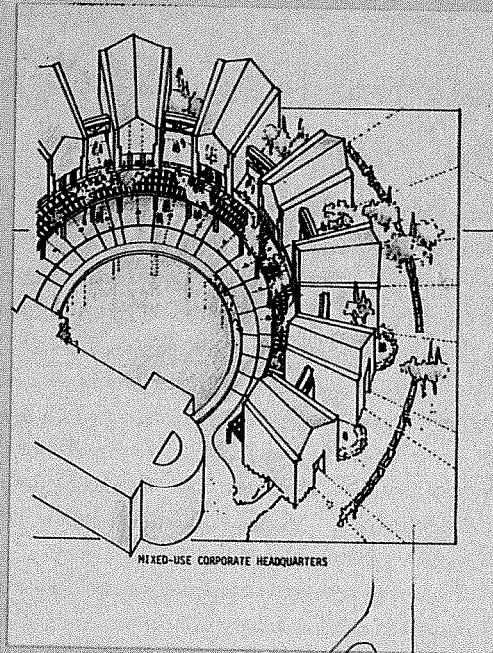
The solutions were successful in two ways. First, competitors understood and respected the scale of the neighborhood. They added shopping areas and cultural centers that had an appropriate scale and texture. Second, they worked with the existing natural features—the park and the stream—to make them integral to their solutions. Sometimes the park became larger, sometimes smaller, but the successful schemes always used it positively.

Solutions put forth for the downtown area, while strong in many cases, were less fresh than those in the older residential area. The existing visual tension between older low buildings lining the street and the new high-rise structures standing apart is difficult to deal with, and relatively few solutions addressed it.

Some of the downtown solutions were simply too grand. They provided public spaces far beyond what is realistic for a city of this density. There was an underlying assumption in many solutions that all downtown areas must throb with life as New York or Paris—virtually impossible here since no one lives downtown and very few people live within walking distance. Perhaps more importantly, few people want to live

Detail of trading post market place.

Detail of mixed-use corporate headquarters.



A street in Oak Creek, the Growing Suburban Edge competition site.

downtown. In cities like Milwaukee, those people who “pioneer” move to the older residential areas, which have great character and are very pleasant. Somehow we must recognize the fact that these downtown areas are quiet after 5 p.m. and that this is not necessarily a problem. For urban dwellers, quiet has become synonymous with danger; this is not always the case.

An opportunity overlooked in many downtown schemes was the city’s most dominant physical feature—Lake Michigan. One of the urban strengths of Milwaukee’s neighbor, Chicago, is that the lake front has a strong public presence. It is unbuilt on for most of the city’s 65 miles of shore line and is entirely in the public domain. This is not the case in Milwaukee. The enormous potential of the lake was recognized and celebrated in the best schemes, but it was ignored in many others.

Jurors generally agreed that the area with which entrants dealt least successfully (many abominably) was the outlying suburban/farm section. Schemes varied tremendously—from no-growth proposals (perhaps to the jury’s eyes the best) to wildly futuristic chaos. A medieval village caught our eye almost in relief. It occurs to me that the addition to the teams of a visionary landscape architect would have been a tremendous help here. The existing, gently rolling farmland with woods, an existing road grid, and some random develop-

ment—these could have been best joined with new development within a strong conceptual landscape framework.

One of the goals of the competition was to encourage realistic urban planning that could be implemented. With the exception of some of the suburban schemes, most of the competitors worked toward that end. The winning schemes intrigued the jury for many reasons—one being their in-depth, micro-analysis of urban situations. These analyses dealt realistically and contextually with Milwaukee, and they provided solutions that could be adapted easily by planners.

This is the first in a series of competitions, each with a different city “type” as its focus. It is important that these competitions continue.