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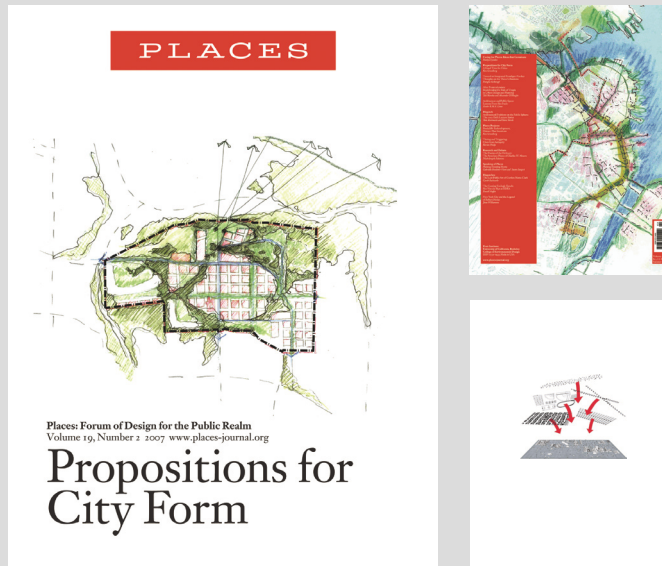
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About the Covers

The covers of this issue highlight emerging trends that have recently reinvigorated the theory and practice of urban design in Europe and the Americas. The issue examines several of these under the title “Propositions for City Form.”

Front cover: The Rockcliffe redevelopment in Ottawa is the flagship for an emerging effort to design “green” infill communities in major Canadian cities, based on a rediscovery of underlying ecologies and a reappraisal of formerly mechanistic assumptions about the relation between human populations and urban space. However, as Ken Greenberg explains, a complex iterative process was required to successfully integrate specialized knowledge from a variety of disciplines. This design framework, “defining the plan as a living instrument capable of absorbing change and responding to evolving needs...provides a model for the type of integrated, flexible thinking required to shape contemporary cities.” Drawing courtesy of Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects.

Back cover: Before its Central Artery came down, the social geography of central Boston was divided into isolated territories. The North End was separated from the West End. Chinatown and the Leather District were separate from Downtown, City Hall Plaza, and so on. Today the Rose Kennedy Greenway and the Crossroads Initiative, part of a public works campaign with few parallels in history, offer the opportunity to break through this previous fragmentation and create a fundamentally altered image of the city in the minds of residents and visitors alike. Pencil sketch by Ken Greenberg.

Inside front cover: As part of an “Ideal Figures Project,” this drawing illustrates the possibility of a new way of thinking about urban redevelopment. Instead of basing plans entirely on an elaboration of flawed existing conditions, Alexander D’Hooghe and Tali Hatuka argue that designers should once again engage with dreams and visions of the ideal. As a tool, such thinking might help overcome “a paralyzing anti-utopianism [that] has isolated the design professions from ongoing social problems.” In this case the drawing indicates the type of concerns that might inform the redesign of poorer suburban areas by a resurgent welfare state. Drawing by Alexander D’Hooghe and Neeraj Bhatia.