



He endorsed the idea of raising the old to make way for the new: "I am cast by nature for the part of the iconoclast. I must strike—tear down before I can build—my very act of building destroys an order. The creative artist is by nature and by office the qualified leader in any society."

Wright's blueprint for the new order was Broadacre City—a frontiersman interpretation of city life. Photo 16 is an illustration of part of his plan. Houses, factories, stores, office buildings and cultural facilities are set in the midst of farmland and forests, and are linked by high speed freeways. The typical dwelling is a ranch on a one-acre lot. Separation of uses and decentralization are the determining forces. This is the precursor of the modern suburb, photo 15.



Wright's philosophy embraced the tyranny of individual rights but ignored the essential nature of community that encourages cooperation. Broadacre City failed to depose centralized urban development; ironically its progeny ring our modern cities, devouring land and squandering a resource Wright would have sought to preserve.



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La Ville Radieuse

Another architectural genius of the twentieth century, Le Corbusier, whose buildings are equally as stunning as those of Wright, also went ballistic when he began to think about cities:

"The harmonious city must first be planned by experts who understand the science of urbanism. They must work out their plans in total freedom from partisan pressures and special interests: once their plans are formulated, they must be implemented without opposition."



Corbusier, unlike Howard and Wright, did not reject cities—he had an heroic vision of them but despised the cities of his day. "To save itself, every great city must rebuild its centre. City dwellers are being sacri-



ficed to a life without hope—without rest—without sky, sun or greenery." His solution was La Ville Radieuse in which buildings are raised on stilts to permit the countryside to run freely below and freeways are likewise raised above ground to permit the unimpeded flow of pedestrian movement. It was the original tower-in-the-park project. In photo 18 you can see his vision and in photo 17 the way it often turned out.

Like the design of the mailbox, the visions of cities I have just described are single minded. They oppose the idiosyncratic interventions of others; and they reject any interpretation of ideas other than their own. In Karl Popper's terms, they are the "enemies of the open society."

New Neighbourhoods

These ideas formed the basis of urban renewal in this country beginning in Toronto with the creation of Regent Park, a housing development shown in photo 20. Regent Park replaced an old established neighbourhood that comprised a mixture of housing and industry. The houses would have looked something like those in photo 19, although probably they were not in such good condition; however, they fronted onto regular city streets and had back gardens and lanes, like any other Toronto neighbourhood. The extraordinary thing is that the density of both the old and the new was not that different. So what did we gain? Places like Regent Park were the immediate precursors of St. Lawrence and when we came to plan the new neighbourhood it was the thinking that lay behind the design of Regent Park we had to change. "What you call a thing determines how you think about that thing and this in turn affects the outcome."

Alan Littlewood is a Toronto architect who taught at the University of Toronto's School of Architecture before joining the design team for the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood. This article is based on a slide presentation he gave at Jane Jacobs: Ideas That Matter in October 1997, after a walking tour of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood.

