Fat City
(A Post-Movement Manifesto)

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Master of Architecture

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HOUSTON, TEXAS

MAY 2005
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2005
ABSTRACT

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The suburbs are making us fat. Fat is driving the suburbs. In an age when most things are measured by their efficient movement, suburban design spirals inward to a terminating node where stored equipment augments an increasingly static lifestyle. This high degree of sedentariness has brought with it obesiotic trends that have increased the girth of homes and bodies sitting around Houston. We are living in an environment expressing the end of movement – an era where physical activity is being engineered out of our lifestyles.

Fat City examines fattening expansion, immobile movement, and where it may lead. Cross sectioning through the metropolis, it analyzes where the chronic problem lies: within the microenvironment of the single-family home. It is a journey from community to singularity. Understood historically and contemporaneously, it will be shown how anti-urban, pathogenic, causal views created the desire for the single-family detached home.

The results of the retreat from community have personal effects encompassing public consequence. Through the historical unraveling of urban growth and the contemporary contextualization of that expansion, the end of movement is revealed. Within this field of abundance, embryonic patterns have begun to emerge and become tangible. This is the age of post-movement and Fat City is the debut of those solidified trends.

MAY 2005
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to my committee - Douglas Oliver, Lars Lerup, and Jessica Young.

Also, I would like to thank John Biln and Helene Furjan for having the extended commitment to critique and advise me on this thesis. Thank you as well to Melissa Sullivan and other members of the Vortex for their insight and spare change.

A specific and special thank you to Sharon - who has supported me in my education (during good times and bad) over the past few years. Thank you.
Fat City

(A POST-Movement MANIFESTO)
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This is a post-movement manifesto. In an age when most things are measured by their efficient movement, suburban design spirals inward to a terminating node where stored equipment augments an increasingly static lifestyle. This high degree of sedentariness has brought with it obesiotic trends that have increased the girth of homes and bodies sitting around Houston. We are living in an environment expressing the end of movement – an age where physical activity is being engineered out of our lifestyles.
From 1970-1997, the supply of soft drinks rose from 24.3 to 53 gallons per capita.
Fat City
(A POST-MOVEMENT MANIFESTO)
SPACE JUNK
The consumer-oriented society has gone universal. In 2000 there were roughly 9,000 man-made objects in orbit around the earth weighing in excess of 4 million pounds. Over two-thirds of these items are debris left over or lost from various space missions. Launching and orbiting trash rockets could alleviate the brimming of many of America's landfills.
JUNKMOUNTAIN
Houston's historic legacy as a sea-level city resting on a coastal plain is manipulated daily. Ship channel dredging displaces earth inland and also accumulates piles forming entirely new islands. Trash is concentrated in a series of landfills that bury much of what represents our society. Houston's junkmountains average 110' in height. The tallest is in Alvin, Texas standing 240' tall.
DOPPELGÄNGER
Variant(s): or doppelgänger /'dæ-pəl-"gænər/-"ga[ng]-&r, -"ge[ng], "dæ-pəl-"
Function: noun
Etymology: German Doppelgänger, from doppel- double + -gänger goer
1: a ghostly counterpart of a living person
2 a: DOUBLE 2a b: ALTER EGO b c: a person who has the same name as another
I'm lovin' it™

"What does Mc mean to me? Everything that I love. It's a big part of my favorite foods like Chicken McNuggets® or an Egg McMuffin® sandwich. Mc is a good time because it always brings us together. It reminds me of something delicious and dependable. To me, Mc means McDonald's®. So I'm cool with Mc and Mc is cool with me."
PARADISE
Each day, one in four Americans eats fast food. Compared to thirty years ago this is a $107 billion increase in the nation's annual fast food budget. McDonald's accounts for 43% of this.
Déjà Vu
Pronunciation: “dB-'zhà-vû, dB-zh[a']-v[UE]
Function: noun
Etymology: French, adjective, literally, already seen
1 a : the illusion of remembering scenes and events when experienced for the first time b : a feeling that one has seen or heard something before
2 : something overly or unpleasantly familiar
REV. 9:17
On Highway 59 through Houston an automobile becomes more than a vessel. It expends the remainder of its energy gloriously. It is a suburban evangelist preaching the end is nigh. "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire... and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."
Introduction

Becoming obese is a normal response to the American environment.

- James O. Hill
America's ability to accumulate evolved from community sustenance and survival to individual efficiency, cleanliness, status, and style. Within the suburban dream, products and desires fill expanding exterior and interior space.

The suburbs are making us fat. Fat is driving the suburbs.
ETHOS

The suburbs are making us fat. Beyond the graphic design visions and built developments attached to vehicular infrastructure, the suburban nature encourages growth in various ways – formally, mechanically, economically, and corporeally. Fat is driving the suburbs. The suburban ethos is stored excess. "Excessive private consumption was not inevitable. It was the result of sustained pressure from real estate interests and their allies in government... As the production of built space came to dominate the economy... the pressures increased."¹ Within the suburban dream, products and desires were created to fill the expanding exterior and interior space. America’s ability to accumulate evolved from community sustenance and survival to individual efficiency, cleanliness, status, and style.

Within fat’s historical meaning, accumulating meanings, and variant spellings – it is positive and negative. Fat is both fertile and foolish. It is richly rewarding and virtually nonexistent. It abounds in desirable elements to unnecessary excess, at once full of wealth and brimming with sloth. Fat is liquid and solid, organic and manufactured, physical and ethereal. Fat is operative. Fat is paradoxical. Fat is phat is fat.
LITE WEIGHT

Houston, Texas has the ability, drive and room to expand to seemingly limitless ends. Space City, by law, has the theoretical capacity to grow with amoeba-like agility, swallowing and digesting almost any foreign downtown, suburb, infrastructure, and mall - tax-base after tax-base. Rem Koolhaas calls it the Lite City – an ephemeral liteness of being. The ground is obese with development and potential. Nothing here will stay. “It brings a quite different psychology from living in a static or declining city. Houston is a place that has yet to get sentimental about its past...” or its future.

Recent media attention focusing on America’s obesity fetish has brought the microphone, microscope, and skin-fold calipers to the suburbs where over 50% of the U.S. population and over 53% of Texans live. Articles, interviews, and statistics give notice to suburban problems that have always subjectively existed, but were rarely quantified. Mechanical mobility without corporeal movement is taking a toll on the suburban populace. Americans average over one hour of drive time per day. Houstonians’ annual delay per person on the roads is 33 hours, 58 hours per peak traveler. The dollar figure attributed to this congestion is over two billion dollars. Each hour spent in a car on a daily basis gives an individual a six percent greater chance of being obese. The same is true for ethereal mobility. By their late teens, children have averaged 38% more time watching television than being in school. Physical sedentariness is now an objective variable in the suburban value system.

Fat is both fertile and foolish. It abounds in desirable elements to unnecessary excess.
1982: 39 annual hours of delay per peak traveler.

2002: 58 annual hours of delay per peak traveler.
DEBUT

*Fat City* examines fattening expansion, immobile movement, and where it may lead. Cross sectioning through the metropolis, it analyzes where the chronic problem lies: within the microenvironment of the single-family home. It is a journey from community to singularity. Community is a vestigial commodified theme. Singularity is an illusion, dependent upon the actions, laws, and structures of billions of other singularities, past, present, and future. Understood historically and contemporaneously, it will be shown how anti-urban, pathogenic, causal views created the desire for the single-family detached home.

From the consumptive house electric impulses are relayed. The desires and needs of the individual within are created, sent forth, collected, collated, purchased, analyzed, manufactured, and sent back in a cardboard box. This is more than a space – it is the sinoatrial node in the heart of the suburban body.

The individual emerges from the home in a new era. The results of the retreat from community have personal effects encompassing public consequence. Through the historical unraveling of urban growth and the contemporary contextualization of that expansion, the *end of movement* is revealed. Within this field of abundance, embryonic patterns have begun to emerge and become tangible. This is the age of post-movement and *Fat City* is the debut of those solidified trends.
She will average 38% more time here than in school.
Fatness

If the system can no longer grow, or if the excess cannot be completely absorbed in its growth, it must necessarily be lost without profit; it must be spent, willingly or not, gloriously or catastrophically.

- Georges Bataille, The Accursed Share
This shows the calories per capita provided by U.S. food supply. Americans consume nearly 300 more pounds of food annually now than they did thirty years ago.

A chronic ailment is an illness of interiority, an individual disease with a public price.
VALUE

Each anatomical process we engage in burns the fuel we consume. Lack of physical activity creates an imbalance within the body where the amount of calories taken in is higher than the amount of calories expended. Our bodies store this excess for survival. As we continue living (or dying) each day, the accumulated energy, stored as fat, is never utilized. Within our environment we make deposits into a system where there will never be a run on the bank. We continue to grow. It is within this equation of how we produce, consume, accumulate, and expend excess that defines our existence.

It is imperative to comprehend that fatness is multi-faceted, made up of everything from atomic manipulations to global shifts - genotypically and phenotypically. Excess is essential for survival and fatness, or the accumulation of excess, is a value particular to social and historical contexts.

Anatomically modern humans have existed for over 100,000 years. Our basic physiognomy has changed little. Generations of hunter-gatherers lived a life where many calories were expended in the quest for a few. Nomadic living, a lack of consistent abundant food sources, and the general composition of food types augmented a lifestyle that stressed the retention of fat for survival while undervaluing its prolonged accumulation.

"Exercise used to go by another name – it was called survival."

—DAVID KATZ
Yale Prevention Research Center

David L. Katz, M.D. spoke at the Summit on Obesity in Williamsburg, Virginia. The event was from June 2 - 4, 2004 and was sponsored by TIME and ABC News.
The majority of cattle are fed with grains and growth hormones. **Grain-fed beef contains 32% more fat than grass-fed cattle.**
Contrasting this is contemporary living, identified by the extreme ease in attaining foods rich in salt, sugar, and fat. Advances in food making have systemically exploited how food is engineered and processed. For example, the mass-production of beef produces a product of equal size in less time. This changed the biological composition of a staple that had gone untouched in the human diet for more than 2.5 million years. Government subsidies, mechanical innovations and genetic manipulations help produce an overabundant national food market. Today, more calories are provided per capita by the food supply than twenty years ago. Americans consume nearly 300 more pounds of food annually now than they did thirty years ago.

Twentieth century America experienced a change in how its citizens and their surroundings interacted. Ecological saltation has a body, situated and influenced in one environment, suddenly shifted to find itself in the same location, but enclosed within a different milieu. The post-industrial era has produced a corporeal organism with more tissue on a weaker frame. Bones are thinner due to less active lifestyles and the body's fat storing ability continues working for a hunter-gatherer who is neither a hunter nor a gatherer.

**DIAGNOSIS**

Today, two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight, one-fifth have been diagnosed as obese. It is expected to grow even larger as the populace gets older and bigger. Excess weight is associated with and is a direct cause of chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and insulin-resistant type 2 diabetes.
(formerly adult-onset diabetes). A chronic ailment, unlike an infectious disease, is an illness of interiority, an individual disease with a public price. “The direct medical costs associated with diabetes have doubled... in the past five years from $44 billion in 1997 to $92 billion in 2002.”

The corporeal body as an organism is classified into five corresponding levels: the whole body, tissue and organ systems, cellular, molecular, and atomic. Its ecology (the metropolitan organism) can also be measured along similar levels to make a diagnosis of its current status and a prognosis on its future one. This diagramming of the system places the metropolis and the body within the same structure. By doing so, a relationship exists between the body and the metropolis in more than a causal way. Because bodies inform the construction of cities and cities affect the makeup of bodies, it is an interrelationship.

This is a diagnosis, an abstract of an urban condition at a particular moment in time. It is a collection of real-time data summarized and processed through various charts and databases. It is placed in the context of an organism’s lifestyle, familial history, what it has consumed, and how that consumption was expended to help determine the levels of toxicity. Fat City is set within the context of a population in its narrowing focus on the molecular (single-family house) and atomic levels (its inhabitants) of one urban organism in particular: Houston, Texas. A historical survey of what created the present condition begins the metropolitan diagnosis.
Contemporary living is identified by its extreme ease in attaining foods rich in salt, sugar, and fat.
Historical Plaque

Not ferre out of the toun in a subarbe callyd Rysbygate.

-The Miracles of St. Edmund, 1433

Jacob A. Riis photographed Mullen’s Alley on February 12, 1886 as part of the tenement-house crusade. He writes, “It is seven feet wide at the entrance, but narrows as you proceed, until at the other end there is less than two feet of space between the walls...twenty-five or thirty families...live in each of the two houses between which it lies. Two wretched rooms, with one window for each room, form the home of every family.”
The Puntian "urban" structure collected the populace inside towns while the productive aspects of the economy lay in the agricultural fields beyond. Growth occurred only when a settlement had reached its predetermined boundary.
BIGNESS

The first western European inhabitants in North America had a paradoxical relationship with their new surroundings.¹ The abundance of resources and space was at once daunting and promising. The vastness of the wilderness brought despair, but also represented the dreams that new communities could be drawn upon. Its unfathomable bigness necessitated scale.

The Puritan movement rationed the land with small, introverted communities. Modeled after English towns, the “urban” structure collected the populace inside towns while the productive aspects of the economy lay in the agricultural fields beyond. Connectivity between towns was mainly by boat and growth occurred only when a settlement had reached its predetermined boundary.² This represented the Puritan ethos of self-sufficiency without accumulation. The system reached its limits as a method of control when the English monarchy reestablished their power.³ Increased immigration also proved the homogeneity of closed village systems short-lived. More than 100 years before this system inverted itself to create the first suburbs in England, it was rejected as a viable way of development.⁴ An urban organism that resisted expansion in the New World had been shut down.
sitting scale.
The Holy Experiment was a profitable, if not completely expansive, antithesis to the Puritan community cluster.
GRIDS
Growing towns and defined transportation routes brought comprehension to the landscape, but scale came in the form of speculative planning. William Penn's 1683 Holy Experiment dreamt of 10,000 acres gridded into one-acre garden house lots. Designed to promote health, it was a reaction to London's closed urban field, recently beleaguered by plagues and fires. Integrating the grid's inherent ability to contract, Penn plotted his vision of a country town on only 1300 acres of land between two rivers. The grid's divisibility made the immediate plan ultimately unattainable as the large lots were divided into smaller parcels and sold by the first owners. It was a profitable, if not completely expansive, antithesis to the Puritan community cluster.

Philadelphia's growth along the grid followed an east-west trajectory, anchored by the city's docks. New York's expansion was similar as it developed improvisationally north away from the harbor. Both cities had fewer than 5,000 people in 1700, but only Philadelphia had a plan dictating where development would occur. By the end of the eighteenth century New York had over 60,000 people (20,000 more than Philadelphia) and still had yet to implement a long-term proposal.

Penn's grid is a closed system bound by two rivers on the east and west axes. The city's extension would continue only through the use of additional grids. Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1932-1959) (right) used the grid as a method to make all existing cities disappear. Both Penn and Wright's plans are reactive to their respective century's urban structures, but Wright's grid is rooted in the expansive industrial grid. An anti-urban and anti-suburban scheme, Broadacre City represented a rebirth of Jefferson's Land Ordinance gridding and agrarian ideals.
One hundred years after the *Holy Experiment* a new type of grid was implemented in the 1811 Commissioner’s Plan of Manhattan. Stretching 11,000 acres north (only 1,000 more than Penn’s), it defied geographical constraints and speculatively expanded New York City five times its existing size. “... The massive gridded extension clearly marks the initiation of an entirely systematic mode of spatial production... the unlimited growth of the city was assured.”¹⁰ Unlike Penn’s agrarian dream, the Manhattan grid was more process than plan, powered by industrial expansion.¹¹ It mapped hope over nature’s despair. The grid brought manageability and scale to the burgeoning industrial cities’ form and future.

The grid’s initial implementation as a decentralized, agrarian, anti-urban plan was superseded by its expansive and divisible abilities.¹² The gridding of the urban field commodified the land into a repetitive and mechanical condition. America was not a country; it was property. Construction innovations empowered the grid to multiply and expand away from the ground plane.¹³ The nineteenth century American city emerged larger, taller, and denser than its predecessors.

In what would become a wealthy, if not entirely destructive, relationship between space and health, America’s consumption-oriented residential existence roots itself in urbanity’s problems. Using the city’s detriments, an anti-urban movement began teaching itself the best way to sell what would become known as the *American Dream*.

The grid brought manageability and scale to the burgeoning industrial city’s form and future.
ANTIGEN

Manufacturing and service jobs siphoned people from small towns and rural surroundings. The population explosion and the expense of urban living required poorer households to cluster together within networks of apartment and tenement buildings.\textsuperscript{14} The tight collection of people combined with insufficient sewage disposal materialized into unsanitary domestic (and public) environments. This promoted "infectious disease as the primary public health threat during the industrial revolution.\textsuperscript{15} The germ theory of disease had recently been formulated, promulgating the causes, preventions, and cures for infectious diseases.\textsuperscript{16} Malnutrition was also a major affliction amongst Americans as calorie and nutrient deficiencies added to the difficulty of fighting communicable disease.\textsuperscript{17}

City health practices, less interested in a city's cleanliness, focused on diagnosing and fighting specific diseases.\textsuperscript{18} This logic directed officials to the microenvironment of the domestic unit. Ethnic and economic biases led to the tenement and away from upper-class areas of the city determined to be "... of the most expensive and thoroughly improved character."\textsuperscript{19} Reasoning aside, this was a clear indictment of the built environment affecting the public's health - \textit{architecture as antigen}. 

The percentage of the population that is rural continues to decline in relation to the United States' overall population (shown in millions). It is estimated only 18% of the population will be non-metropolitan by the year 2020.
as antigen.
Human and urban organisms have a mutually defining relationship.\textsuperscript{20} The propaganda by the human against the nineteenth century American city (human built) was dispersed as a causal view. Promoting only the city’s pathogenic qualities simplified the equation to better sell the antidote. The endorsement of the suburbs as the anti-city began in eighteenth century London and encompassed a redefinition of the family and its preferable urban activity.\textsuperscript{21} This also required a reevaluation of what the suburb was and what it could offer the domestic nuclear family.

s\textsuperscript{ü}b\textsuperscript{ü}r\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{l}

The invention of agriculture, creating a stable food supply, allowed humans to concentrate in greater numbers. As urban centers formed, so did suburbs. They have shifted in meaning and relation to cities since their inception thousands of years ago.\textsuperscript{22} Suburban independence had no declaration, but found its subtle transformation begin in the English countryside. Based on the villa typology, London’s wealthy merchants reversed the role of their weekend retreats.\textsuperscript{23} Separating the working and domestic environment present in their urban townhouses the country homes became their primary residences. The new villas appropriated important aspects of aristocratic estates, but differed in how they related to one another creating a shared public space. “Suburb” was redefined as a group of houses in a park.\textsuperscript{24}

This type of development was different than in continental Europe.\textsuperscript{25} England and America stood alone in their quest to expand the city by escaping it. Influenced by English activities, Andrew Jackson Downing and Catherine Beecher sold the sanctity of the detached house in a picturesque setting to the American public through writing. Though unattainable to the majority of Americans, the popularity of their books was proof that the seeds had taken root.\textsuperscript{26}

Promising fresh air without contaminants (moral or otherwise), solitary life away from the city showed signs of its first disorder – loneliness.\textsuperscript{27} As a deterrent to this emerging disease, among other reasons, community was commodified. Based on earlier religious communitarian ideals, this aspect of the evolving American suburb enabled wealthy residents to surround themselves with other affluent families.\textsuperscript{28}
DESIGN I.

A Suburban Cottage for a small Family.

We have adopted this cottage to be situated in the vicinity of a town or village, and, for the sake of brevity, in the treatment of a small portion of ground, we shall also imagine it to be placed in a lot of ground 120 feet front by 120 deep, which, at the time of ours, was the building, but upon it no trees or improvements of any description.

By referring to the plan of the first floor of this cottage, Fig. 1, the reader will perceive on the left of the hall, the parlor, or sitting-room, 16 feet by 12 feet, having in communication with it, a pantry and a closet for books, each 4 feet by 4 feet. On the opposite side of the hall are, the kitchen, 14 feet by 14, and a bedroom 12 feet by 12 feet.

In the plan of the chamber floor, Fig. 2, there are four bedrooms, all shingled, and one of small dimensions. Sufficient office rooms will be obtained under the living room, closets.
COMMUNITY

House and yard surrounded by community were the selling points of the American Dream. Each had consumptive power. The house (and Beecher) encouraged the use and accumulation of goods to promote capitalism. Intrinsic to the picturesque, the suburban landscape organized consumption of the view. Gated communities built off of rail lines (urban grid extensions) collected both by creating jurisdictional cells that had the ability to exclude and remove constituents - undemocratic developments formally rooted on America's democratic superstructure.

The American Dream during the economic depression of the 1930s was challenged as banks foreclosed over 1000 homes a day. Government, pairing home ownership with good citizenship, passed the 1934 Federal Housing Act establishing the thirty-year loan with a ten percent down payment. This event welcomed the government into the housing market and guaranteed the future of the detached single-family home. The private was now publicly subsidized.

The “democratization” of the villa only addressed the increased affordability of the detached home. Having money to purchase a house did not guarantee the freedom to live anywhere. Class and race segregation, imposed or self-propagated, atomized the public sphere. The equalizing shift that connected each enclave, home, and inhabitant was the consumption of identical home products. American consumption was seen as a social movement in lieu of political activism. As more families chose the suburbs (space and distance), external community’s importance as a commodity lessened. This allowed for an internal adaptation of community to emerge, less about neighboring vessels than the collections of stuff inside them. Consumption replaced community. The suburban equation, once a union between house, land, and community, had changed.

The percentage of the overall population that is suburban steadily increased over the 20th century reaching 50% just before 2000. It currently comprises 72% of the growing metropolitan population.
England and America stood alone in their quest to expand the city by escaping it.
Unlike historical urban precedent of activating the voids, outward expansion triggered the grid line. The 1956 Interstate Highway Act extruded select lines. Urban islands were created as each segment of super road sectioned off parts of the city.
BYPASS

The post-war economy set free the promise of a “future of mass employment, mass production, and mass distribution and ownership.” War factories produced refrigerators in place of tanks and automobiles instead of planes. The housing industry increased production by forty-three percent, mostly on the urban fringe. Increased auto-mobility made existing streets overcrowded and required a derivative of the grid. Unlike historical urban precedent of activating the voids, outward expansion triggered the grid line. The 1956 Interstate Highway Act extruded select lines. Urban islands were created as each segment of super road sectioned off parts of the city. The highway connected outlying suburbs with the central business district by disconnecting the urban core from adjacent neighborhoods, often inhabited by people of color. Catering to regional developments, the 42,500 miles of concrete and asphalt bypassed local conditions. All done in a paradoxical effort to bring people back into the city.
Houston, Texas (March 1977) - Eastex freeway at Loop 610 Interchange.
Extrusion.
Measuring distance in commute time, the highway permitted development further from the urban core. Subdivisions sprouted and flourished in former agricultural fields. Developers built roads connecting the enclaves to the highway and pledged public amenities as secondary and tertiary planning phases to influence a local government’s growth decisions.\textsuperscript{40} The guise of publicness was still active in development schemes. The civic buildings promised within residential developments never occurred as funding for parks, schools, and integrated shopping areas fell short.

Companies analyzing demographic shifts and buying trends followed the exodus from the urban core.\textsuperscript{41} The periphery’s obese markets of suburban consumers and workers guaranteed the decentralization of the central business district. Retail and office space shifted to multiple regional strip centers, malls, and office parks. Zoning and neighborhood ordinances prevented these developments from integrating with residential areas. Separated from domestic zones, the massing of these speculative interests created urban \textit{edge cities}.\textsuperscript{42}

The edge city is the efficient distribution system of America’s commercial exchange. Measured not in speed or waste production, it is efficient at being \textit{productive of desired effects} - billions of them. Edge city efficiency is the circulation of marketable movement around multiple business districts. It is calculated in the processing of business transactions and credit card receipts.
The American distance, comprehended and scaled through gridding and speculation, was conquered by the increased availability of mass-produced commodities. Innovations in communication, media, and transportation reshaped civic and domestic space. Telephones etherealized distance and communication. A conversation with a friend, colleague, or salesman occurred in multiple places at the same time. The phone was in 60 percent of American households by 1950 and is currently in 94 percent of homes.\textsuperscript{43}

The automobile substituted distance with time.\textsuperscript{44} Miles translated into minutes. As suburban development broke the tether of public transportation, expansion accommodated the car and not the pedestrian. The relationship between public and private loosened to unwalkable distances.

The television, via the radio, encapsulated space and diverted attention. The world was invited into the home as a one-way relationship between public and private. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover comments in 1927, "Today we have... the transmission of sight for the first time in the world's history. Human genius has now destroyed the impediment of distance in a new respect, and in a manner hitherto unknown."\textsuperscript{45} It is presently in 99 percent of American homes, 43 percent of which have three or more television sets. Nearly half of TV households in the United States report viewing multiple sets simultaneously in different locations within the home.\textsuperscript{46}
Herbert Hoover on television in 1927.
CASUALTY
Suburban development advertised itself as the antidote to the mechanized urban ecology. Focusing on the development of the single-family home, it provided America's desired spatial distance from contagious and moral contaminants. Over the twentieth century, the suburban package evolved from a home in nature surrounded by community to a community of commodities within a home.47

It is within the home and not the skyscraper, as once dreamed by Raymond Hood, where community activities have been combined. The suburban house is the "city under a single roof."48 The house consumes urban activities.49 Monofunctional space and merchandise fill the rolls of formally exterior domains. HomeSHOPPING, homeBUSINESS, homeSCHOOLING, and homeTHEATER are fed with satellites, cables, and wi-fi technologies. The functional girth, vaporously extracted from the city to the home, condensates and pools on the body of the sedentary American. The necessity for bodily presence and physical activity has been erased from the contemporary city. Urban, suburban, and domestic planning continue to design toward this end of physical movement.

The suburbs evolved from a home in nature surrounded by community to a community of commodities within a home.
The Skeen Family and their
5 telephones, 2 cars, 3 radios,
3 stereos, 2 televisions, 1 computer...
Houston

 There is no place in Texas more healthy . . . (None) possesses so many advantages for building . . . It is handsome and beautifully elevated, salubrious and well-watered.

 - C. Allen & J.K. Allen, 1836: first posted advertisement for Houston, Texas
FAT URBANISM

Houston was founded and thrives on speculation. Compared to the industrial grid, Houston’s future is secure in a less mechanical, but equally methodical fashion. Growth continues because it can - spatially and legally. The 1965 Municipal Annexation Act strategically incorporated speculation as annexation. Learning through the failure of other American cities, Houston (and Texas) adapted reactionary growth strategies to urban flight. Houston is not concerned with peripheral growth because it is its future. The city extends and develops by feeding off unincorporated developments and their tax bases. Space City’s land area of 633 square miles is twice as large as New York City’s and 25 percent larger than Los Angeles’. Orlando, Denver, Las Vegas, Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco could collectively fit within Houston’s city limits. The city’s urban area is 60 percent larger than Rhode Island.

Houston is the largest city in the nation without zoning laws. Virtually anything can be built anywhere as buildings can supposedly “... re-conform like a floating currency to any temporary use.” What would seem like an ideal location for the recyclability of buildings actually gives birth to its opposite. Accelerated depreciation programs entice building construction without long-term commitments. There is profit in a building growing older faster than it should. When a building is no longer needed, it is erased from the slate. In a city that lacks sentimentality, everything is unstable.

The erasure of architecture is a retraction of the grid. Properties wiped clean of brick and steel become concrete fields for temporary car storage. Skyscraper office space collapses into surface parking for the office workers. The parking lot marks the beginning of the journey from fat circulation to fat living. Houston’s mobile technology rests here before feeding onto the road system where it atomizes at seventy miles per hour.
Tree-like support columns and color schemes referencing a city's river system remind occupants of what may have been there.
FAT CIRCULATION
The grid defined American’s understanding of space and movement. Highways (extruded grid lines) structure mobility without movement through that space. Houstonians’ automobiles travel nearly 43 million freeway miles daily while the occupants move zero. Widened road diagrams discourage pedestrian movement. “Any adult between 18 and 65 walking along one would instantly fall under suspicion of being less than a good citizen.”

Individuals navigate around Houston in automobiles. There is no alternative. The highway’s only purpose is to transport people from point A to point B. It is the city’s largest and longest metropolitan organism devoted to monofunctionality. The automobile attempts to diversify journeys by accumulating functions. Seats transform into desks. Headrests are entertainment centers. Armrests encompass earphone jacks and climate controls. Technology further disconnects a vehicle’s occupants from each other.
The freeway interchange is a swift segue during the commute. Tree-like support columns and color schemes referencing a city's river system remind occupants of what may have been there. Paving patterns increase tire friction as vehicles round the curve. Billions of dollars have gone into the engineering of the high-velocity transfer points as cities boast about five-level interchanges. The terms used for the nation's roadways are at once misrepresentative and completely honest. The freeway is not free; taking the amount of energy (physically and monetarily) expended each year ($106 billion in 1998) maintaining its existence and planning its future.11 “At one point in the early 1990s, Houston alone was spending more on roads than any state except California [and Texas].”12 In contrast, the feeder road delivers cars to the freeway and is the ideal location for the feeding of the occupants and vehicles that travel the roads.

Automobiles glide onto Houston's forty-four mile long 610 Loop.13 Since this road was constructed it has been circumscribed by an additional loop, Beltway 8. The cycle of federally funded road construction is perpetual. Currently, this loop prime is being encircled by another circumferential road, the SuperLoop (or the more marketable title, The Grand Parkway). Highway 6 and FM1960 act as a partial fourth loop in between the SuperLoop and Beltway 8. Roadways are magnets that attract speculative domestic and commercial developments.14 Hybrid restaurant-gas stations, strip malls, stretch malls, and super-regional malls use the first rule of real estate locating themselves near exit ramps on each of the loops.15
Freeway and feeder road in Houston.
In 1991 there were up to 450,000 billboards along America's highways, roadways, and streets.

Houston's fat advertisements deal with the city's ranking as America's fattest city four of the last five years.
The "generic infrastructures" highlight their merchandise with super signage and billboards – beacons of fat advertising. In 1991 it was estimated that there were up to 450,000 billboards along America’s highways, roadways, and streets. Houston has a glut of fat advertising along its high volume freeways. The three companies that advertise on super-signage the most nationwide are McDonald’s, Anheuser-Busch and Miller – three products readily available on Houston’s feeder roads.

Instability reigns along these secondary roads. As freeway size increases, saltation is inevitable at the exit ramp-feeder junction. Buildings and logos disappear as quickly as they appeared. The land adjacent to the road fattens with asphalt and commercial maturity. Some developments become inglorious promenades of stretch malls while others bloat into edge cities.

In the summer of 2004 drivers saw Todd Krampitz on a billboard. Suffering from hepaticellular carcinoma, he rented two signs asking for a donated liver. After receiving a transplant he continued using billboards to encourage organ donations and thanking those that helped him.
In 2004 one in four Americans ate fast food each day. America’s 2004 fast food budget was 36 times higher than 1972’s total.

The distribution of fast food restaurants is a primary instrument in blurring the urban border from the rural one.
FAT CONSUMPTION

The eating of one species by another is the simplest form of luxury.
- Georges Bataille, The Accursed Share

The individual choice of garnishment of a burger can be an important point to the consumer in this day when individualism is an increasingly important thing to people.
- Donald Smith, former president of Burger King

Stoplights slow and pool automobiles. *[Fast food chains]...look at cars the way predators view herds of prey. The chains thrive on traffic...*[19] Billboards and restaurant logotecture work more effectively than other multi-media advertising campaigns. *“More than 70 percent of fast food visits are 'impulsive.'*[20] Each day, one in four Americans eats fast food amounting to a $107 billion increase in the nation's annual fast food budget compared to thirty years ago.*[21] It is effortless consumption. Fast food, once associated with the quicker pace of the “big city” has found its niche away from the urban cores. The distribution of these restaurants is a primary instrument in blurring the urban border from the rural one.*[22] Greater Houston blurs its edge with 253 McDonald's restaurants.
Ray Kroc bought the right to franchise McDonald’s from Richard and Maurice McDonald in 1954. By 1968 there were 1,000 nationwide. Currently, there are over 13,000 outlets in the United States.
consumption.
Food and space have historically been situated around retaining freshness by getting perishable items to consumers quickly. This is now secondary in understanding food's current place along the American landscape when processing, flavor, and genetic technologies bridge this gap. As consumption of meals outside the home (foods higher in fat and caloric intake) increases, additional physical activity must be done to effectively expend the increase. A Big Mac® meal contains 1400 calories requiring a 9.5-mile walk to use the bonus energy consumed. Understood this way, the distance from El Paso to Texarkana is 88 Big Mac® meals wide (or only 54 Hardees® Monster Thickburger meals wide). Food and space must now be understood at the other end of consumption - post-freshness. Reevaluating distance and food visualizes the relationship between food and energy beyond the abstract definition of a calorie.

"The restaurant marks the convergence of the personal and the social, the private and the public." In America, about 43 percent of food expenses occur outside of the house. It is the only activity the home has purged willingly to the city. Restaurants have infiltrated almost every commercial program. Fast food and gas stations create one-stop shop environments. Within big box retail outlets a restaurant is the first and last thing a consumer sees. Bookstores incorporate coffeehouses while malls center themselves around the food court. On the West 610 Loop, Houston’s Galleria Shopping
Food and space are now understood at the other end of consumption - post-freshness.

88 Big Mac® Meals wide.

Only 54 Hardee's® Monster Thickburger meals wide.
Center has 18 fast food restaurants, 11 full service restaurants, 22 specialty food stores, and zero health clubs.28 As more commodities are purchased online, people need a reason to shop publicly.29 Commercial developments require food to survive. The privatized act of eating is on display while merchandise is taken home and consumed privately. Fat consumption mingles with fat living.

Driving beyond the commercial district, a threshold is crossed. Concrete medians bloom into thickened gardens. Nature is introduced. Landscaping sets the vestigial picturesque scene of houses in a park remaining the tangible edge that separates business space from domestic. Two centuries of themes, theories, manifestoes, analyses, economies, slogans, and products formed the desire for the single-family detached home. It is where Americans celebrate, procreate, and accumulate their lives in garages, attics, closets, cabinets, and plastic containers.

Eating is on display while merchandise is taken home and consumed privately. Fat consumption mingles with fat living.

(right) Eighteen of the Galleria's fifty-one food establishments.
Compared to the beginning of the 20th century, households have fewer people and homes are twice as large. American homeowners currently have nearly five times more interior home space than in 1900.

1900 - 4.6 people within 850 square feet.

2000 - 2.59 people within 2,200 square feet.

1900 - 185 sf / person

2000 - 849 sf / person
FAT LIVING

Underneath this flabby exterior is an enormous lack of character.
- Oscar Levant

Americans live a counterintuitive existence. In defining obesiotic trends in contemporary America inverse relationships of consumption, construction, activity, mobility, accumulation, and storage emerge. Gastronomically since 1970 Americans have decreased the amount of fat in their diets while increasing the number of calories consumed. Financially, thirty and forty year mortgages are signed on homes that will be lived in for only seven years. Spatially, households have fewer people and homes are twice as large. American homeowners have nearly five times more interior home space than they did at the beginning of the 20th century. The house is fat. The suburban home is one monument. Within it an imbalance has emerged in the interrelationship between the body and space.

Trends in the evolution of domestic space show American’s changing desires. Parlors became less formal living and family rooms. Car ownership created and then enlarged garage space. Eighty-three percent of new homes have at least a two-car garage. Accumulation stresses the current need of storage space. Even though closet space has increased five-fold since 1950, a majority of homeowners still want more.
The home is a profit vessel. It accrues equity and equipment. Growing equity allows occupants to trade-up to larger homes in burgeoning enclaves. The home no longer evolves with a family.\textsuperscript{35} The house, like the commodities within, is discarded for a newer model requiring homes to accept accumulation from any body at any time. Because of this and general economies of scale, contemporary homes are not made expandable, but are built expanded. Super sizing a house is encouraged as space cheapens with additional square footage.\textsuperscript{36} The attempt to satisfy household desires, market trends, and resale potential produces two types of house flab.

The first is \textit{peripheral flab} representing stylistic differences between homes. Themed ornament (interior and exterior), trellises, viewless dormer windows, and a plethora of roof peaks characterize it. Peripheral flab is adjustable without \textit{major} reconstructive surgery and can be lost or gained in equal time. The addition or subtraction of peripheral flab does not effect how the home functions.

The second type, on the other hand, infiltrates the space and use of the house. It is \textit{visceral flab} and is prophetic in nature, capitalizing on the economies of scale. Rooted in the home's future market, it expands a garage from two-cars to three, two and a half bathrooms to four. Nearly 40 percent of new homes have four or more bedrooms.\textsuperscript{37} That is one and a half more \textit{bedrooms} than the average number of occupants.
Features:
- 3 Bedrooms
- 2 Baths
- 2-Car Garage
- 1,847 sq. ft.
More.
The house plan proliferates with generic space. Merchandise and technology find their nexus within and supplement visceral flab. Commodities add "individuality" to a room's ambiguity, affecting the function of the space.\textsuperscript{38} Room "set aside for a special use or a specific person" is monofunctional space.\textsuperscript{39} This, combined with more rooms occupied by less people (underutilization), connotes a thinning of space.\textsuperscript{40}

Thin space defines the fat house. Multifunctionality is unwarranted. For example, earlier home models had food preparation and consumption occur in the kitchen, incorporating around 20 percent of a home's interior volume. Currently, food space has maintained its spatial proportion, but has dispersed its activity. The number of interior spaces devoted to food has increased to at least three (kitchen, dining room, and morning area) in present custom models.\textsuperscript{41} Specificity of space carries through the entire house with home gyms, media rooms, offices, living rooms, bedrooms, and walk-in closets.

As space expands and function thins, the amount of energy required to produce and maintain a fat house is increased. It is opposite of the level typically performed by its corpulent resident. Technology bridges this gap between the two obesities. Just as the automobile made the widening of exterior space feasible and livable, the stretching of interior space entails the same lust for innovation. Electric appliances, from sewing machines to ovens, advertise themselves as labor saving devices cutting the amount of time and energy spent doing specific activities. For instance, washing dishes burns 80 calories in thirty minutes while loading a dishwasher expends 23 calories in ten minutes.\textsuperscript{42}
1999 Model No. 51 from The Radford Ideal Homes plan catalog.

Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 834
Usable - 716

Food Prep/Consumption:
163 square feet (23% of usable sf)
1,726 cubic feet (23% of usable cf)


Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 2,368
Usable - 2,086

Food Prep/Consumption:
389 square feet (19% of usable sf)
3,036 cubic feet (17% of usable cf)

(i-r) No. 51 and No. 2368W unfolded.
The one and only thing NEW in television!

**ZENITH**

**"SPACE-COMMAND" TV TUNER**

It answers silent commands from your easy chair... or even from the next room. Turns on and off, changes stations, mutes sound, shuts off long annoying commercials!

You'll be amazed! There's nothing between you and the television set but space! No wires, no cords, no batteries, no radio control waves. Yet the "SPACE-COMMAND" control has in your hand carries out your commands from across the room, or even from the next room. Is it magic? How does it work? Well, see it yourself... try it yourself at your Zenith dealer's. It's like nothing you have ever seen before—anywhere, anytime. And only Zenith has it! **NOTHING BETWEEN YOU AND THE SET BUT SPACE**

The remote has now become ubiquitous with controlling the domestic environment.
Physical activity was lessened further by the remote control. The first television remote was nicknamed “Lazy Bones” and the garage door opener removed almost all remaining movement involved in driving a car.\textsuperscript{43} The remote has now become ubiquitous with controlling the domestic environment. Smart house technology for total home automation is a super-remote that directs all household appliances. It can also involve the use of surfaces and sensors to control the importing and exporting of anything from grocery lists to medical information.\textsuperscript{44} The occupant needs only to worry about consuming.

New technology is not the only culprit instigating mobility without movement. Alterations to and combinations of existing services encourage introverted, stationary lifestyles. For example, Netflix\textsuperscript{®}, an online DVD rental store, combines theater, computer, television, take-out, and mail. For a monthly fee, a “revolving library” of DVDs gets shipped to a customer’s home. The number of DVDs seen in a given month depends entirely on how much time the consumer spends watching television.\textsuperscript{45} Currently, adults watch 139 hours of TV per month, or 19 percent their lives.\textsuperscript{46} Netflix\textsuperscript{®} challenges the average American to get their money’s worth by physically doing nothing.

The retreat from community to singularity has produced a profitable, but fatal, existence. Increased lethargy has given rise to mutations that generate a return into the open. Brain activity, blood-sugar levels, blood pressures, weight, heart rates, hormone secretions, movie lists, consumer ratings, brand loyalties, shoe size, and encrypted pin numbers all leave the home. Fat data is amassed and analyzed blurring the relationship between production and consumption. “Even as we consume commodities and services... we produce information functional to the production of new commodities and services.”\textsuperscript{47}
Any variant reading alerts hospitals or corporations tracking the patient/consumer’s medical and consumptive preferences. An individual rejoins the public as ethereal data collated within statistics. Their mobility is digitized and travels at phenomenal speeds, while they remain motionless. This is post-movement.

Fat urbanism’s atomized circulation, ease of consumption, and accumulated living revolve around the lone user. Their sedentary existence has shifted to a stationary one. Post-movement is rooted within the suburban home, a condensed nodule of (formerly) urban activity. The expanding domestic organism is Fat City. The home is not to be recognized as a small city within a large house, but to supersede the metropolis altogether, to become a fat city surrounded by other fat cities.⁴⁸

Fat abounds in desirable elements to unnecessary excess. The home encapsulates indolence flanked by parking and storage (redundancy?). Empty, mass-produced shelving indicates interior storage while inert seating represents recreation and living. Another seat (the toilet) signifies services.⁴⁹ The contemporary home’s public retreat, evident in the dismissal of the front porch, is negated by the picture window. Display penetrates the house and reveals the home’s lone occupant. Naked on a bed, covered only by a towel, Michael Walker is mobility without movement - convenience at arm’s length. Children ogle in amusement and dismay. Exhibited to the masses, brimming with sloth, his fat city tours the country as a moral lesson against the negative effects of addiction.

The home supersedes the metropolis altogether and becomes a fat city surrounded by other fat cities.

(right) Jennifer Schub’s Zones of Property Use diagram of the single family house. The icons denote the monofunctionality expressed within the home, but they also reveal the static environment of thin space and sedentary living.
Coda

I think of optimism as a fundamental position, in the sense that it is almost an implicit obligation of an architect... I am not a really optimistic person.

- Rem Koolhaas
Parkside development located west of Houston in between Highway 6 and the Grand Parkway uses smart growth surface strategies to promote the investment. The alleys, twice as wide as typical streets, reveal the development's commitment to Houston's automobile culture.

Space, praised and feared during the colonization of the United States, was scaled and commodified with the grid, producing an unrestrained urban organism. Overcrowding, disease, and the banality of repetitive forms encouraged a revolt against the nineteenth century American city. The desire for a detached home in nature was created representing the anti-city. It inherited the freedom, health, and affluence that villas and country estates had embodied for centuries. Construction innovations, fiscal lending reforms, health advocacy, advertising, and rising incomes supported its increased affordability. The house was the vessel that collected and sheltered retreating urbanites leaving the city.

Highways extruded and fattened grid lines, swallowed land, and displaced urban and rural fabric. The automobile privatized the freeway's public space and preserved human scale with steel and speed. Widened sections of road accommodated merchandise and food. The house located itself within subdivisions placed along the highway's arterial corridors. Residential developments attempted to refute the substitution of the public sphere by individual home consumption through regulations and community organizations.
Aerial photographs document the expanse of rectangular big-box retail outlets among spiraling (organic) housing enclaves. These are the ubiquitous suburban and exurban forms referenced in smart-growth publications, but these forms (spatial leapfrogging) only describe the obesiotic trend - they do not embody it. Mixed-use masterplans create public spheres that attempt to reestablish a physically mobile populace, denying the prevalence (and preference) of stationary living within the Fat City. Post-movement saturates each dwelling and redefines what is desired exterior to the home. Sprawl, or congealed atomization, is ironically fertilized by the distance and docility engineered within the single-family home.

Construction inside Houston’s inner loop does not indicate the end of outward growth or the return of a pedestrian urbanity. The continuing subdivision of properties (vis-à-vis Penn’s Holy Experiment) places six condominiums where two homes once stood. Land and neighborhood, two of the three parts of the American Dream, are relinquished for interior consumptive space. Understanding the existence (and necessity) of certain homespace reevaluates current and future developments. Post-movement ignorance in suburban design and urban (re)development continues to erase historical cores. Not by removing people, but by returning them.¹
Fat living has a predetermined conclusion. "By focusing on individualistic wants, the market system undermines [a] willingness to pay for public goods..." Institutions falter and shut down. Everything becomes reactionary and industry is prepared to feed off of this necessity. Financial restructuring and new commodities are sought to secure the individual's survival in lieu of the public's demise. Amortization periods are extended to maintain the detached home's affordability. Airlines' "person of size" policies require overweight passengers to purchase multiple seats. Insurance companies charge higher premiums for larger than average Americans. Pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly & Co. profits $360 million on insulin products during single fiscal quarters. The Pine Box ®, a funeral product retailer in Houston, Texas, sells oversized caskets for, predictably, a growing industry. Death permits a final purchase. Post-mortem, super-sized space sells.

Four out of the last five years Houston has held the distinction of being "America's Fattest City." Political forces grimace at the description and then formulate committees with fitness czars. The soundbite is as powerful as it is ephemeral. Reactionary invention circulates and maintains sustainability without enhancibility. This moment can pass without comprehension or it can be analyzed and used as an agent for change. Houston's lack of sentimentality permits this. Fat City, for now, is a tool for this moment - an attempt to view the interdependence between individuals and their ecology. Recognizing the interrelationship between the body and space is primal in understanding the gravity of the situation. Michael Walker's world revolved around him, but within his stasis he lacked the ability to interact with the world. The fattening home has the same consequence and requires more than just a new masterplan.
Mayor: Fat city title doesn't fit

As magazine puts Houston back at No. 1, White unveils a program to get city moving

By THOM MARSHALL

One minute Mayor Bill White defended Men’s Fitness magazine’s methodology for labeling Houston the nation’s fattest city, and the next minute he announced a new wellness initiative to combat the label.

“It’s calculated with vodka and fraud,” White said of the rankings of 50 cities across the nation featured in the magazine’s February issue, with Houston back in fattest place.

The magazine put Houston in second place last year, behind Detroit, but for three straight years before that, Houston topped the list of heaviest cities.

To determine the rankings, the magazine staff does not actually weigh anyone, but instead uses a formula of city data, including the number of fast food and pizza restaurants.

THE TOP FIVES

One of the keys to the city’s ranking is its fast food and pizza restaurants.

1. Houston
2. Philadelphia
3. Detroit
4. Minneapolis
5. Denver

Related story: Please see Houston column on Page 13

“Men are the key to the city and the formula,” White said at a press conference Thursday, announcing the formation of a city-wide Wellness Council to address the issue.

$100 million in public and private money, with White saying Houston has $300 million in physical fitness programs already in place.

“Not much can’t be done. We can’t do anything about the formula of fast food in Houston,” White said.

The mayor’s plan also calls for a 15-year program to get city employees, working with schools to promote health in food choices and activities, sponsoring city walking, running and bicycling events and putting the restaurant and grocery industries to promote healthy eating.

White’s predecessor, Lee Brown, also responded to the “Fattest City” ranking when Houston first made the list in 2003, announcing a fitness program to help those falling into a fitness trap.

The current city designation was a topic at Wednesday’s City Council meeting.

“The more I think about it, I don’t know why we’re not in the top three,” White said of the city’s fat city designation.

“First thing we need to do is have a good Andy,” White said, referring to a former mayor.

Houston Chronicle, 8 January 2005

Head of wellness council says communication is key

Continued from page B1

The council staff examines 10 elements of city life, including: 

- air quality
- crime rate
- commute time
- number of health clubs and sporting goods stores
- number of fast food and pizza restaurants

Schools to promote health in food choices and activities, sponsoring city walking, running and bicycling events and putting the restaurant and grocery industries to promote healthy eating.

White who is lean and appears physically fit, also demon-strates political ability as he bounces back and forth between criticizing the magazine and pointing out the dangers of obesity.

Although Houston long has been famous for having huge buildings and high-speed traffic, White said the climate is ideal year-round for more forms of outdoor physical exercise.

“If you want to ski we’re pretty low,” he admitted, but then quickly ticked off some popular activities that can be pursued — walking, jogging, running, tennis, golf, baseball, basketball.

White’s predecessor, Lee Brown, also responded to the “Fattest City” ranking when Houston first made the list in 2003, announcing a fitness program to help those falling into a fitness trap.

The current city designation was a topic at Wednesday’s City Council meeting.

“Here’s the problem,” White said of the city’s fat city designation.

“We have a good Andy,” White said, referring to a former mayor.

At his Friday news conference, White said the magazine editor told him if Houston followed through on the initiative, it likely would drop below fifth place next year, but the mayor has a bigger goal in mind.

“Let’s get off that list,” he said.

Houston Chronicle, 8 January 2005

Houston’s Mayor Bill White on NBC’s Today Show in January 2005.
Notes

Most of the material that you were dealing with had no connection with anything in the real world, not even the kind of connection that is contained in a direct lie. Statistics were just as much a fantasy in their original version as in their rectified version. A great deal of the time you were expected to make them up out of your head.

- George Orwell, 1984
Manifesto / Movement Without Mobility

1. An Age where physical activity: Hoelscher, PM, RD, LD, Deanna M. Director, Human Nutrition Center, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston – School of Public Health, Personal interview, 29 Sep 2004.


Visions of Excess


15. doppelganger www.m-w.com.

17. Advertisement: The McDonald's Corporation


23. And thus I saw www.online-bible.org.

Introduction


2. Space City: Houston's nickname derived from NASA's Johnson Space Center located south of the city, it aptly represents what Houston is now: a city anchored to Spaceland Earth for its quest for expansive fat urbanism. The 1965 Municipal Annexation Act gives Texas cities an extraterritoriality jurisdiction zone (E.T.J) where unincorporated towns within this area are reserved for annexation by the E.T.J's home city. Pre-1965 incorporated cities are safe from annexation, whereas an unincorporated town within the E.T.J can never incorporate itself. Lord, Tom Forrest. Instructor, Rice University. Housing and Urban Policy Lecture. 7 Sep 2004.

3. "Lit City: It is clear on any drive through Houston that what is needed is a science of desatellite- - an art of erasure – the development of "occupying" formerly urban territory (park is not by any stretch of the imagination the right word) but with a less substantial, therefore less oppressive and less vulnerable kind of urban condition that offers the benefits of the urban condition – catalytic chains and patterns of unpredictable events – without the weight of matter – call it Lit City.” See: Koohsara, Rem. SMUx. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1998. 904,920.


Fatness


5. Ibid. 56.


Historical Plaque


3. Ibid. 21-23.

4. London’s eighteenth century plan had wealthier families closer to the center while the edge of the city housed the underclass. Urban expansion was denied because it meant the extension of the poor further out into more economically productive farmlands. “When the city as a whole grew slowly or not at all, this crowding was the problem of the poor alone. But when London began its explosive growth, the peripheral areas acted like an elegiac container for the rapidly expanding core. Inevitably, all districts grew more crowded, including the areas of privilege at the center.” See: Fishman, Robert. Bourgeois Utopias. United States: Basic Books, Inc., 1987. 18-38.
6. The Great Plague swept through London during the summer of 1665 killing an estimated 100,000 people. The Great Fire in September of 1666 ravaged London for four days, ending the plague and destroying nearly 80% of the city.
7. Pen-in's grid is a closed system bound by two rivers on the east and west axes. The city's extension would continue only through the use of additional grids. Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1932-1959) encompassed this type of decentralized gridding as a method of making all existing cities disappear. Both Pen-in and Wright's plans are reactive to their respective century's urban structures, but Wright's grid is rooted in the expansive industrial grid. Broadacre City could blanket the landscape for a hundred miles, being neither the country nor the city. An anti-urban and anti-suburban scheme, it represented a rebirth of Jefferson's Land Ordinance gridding and agrarian ideals. See: See Pope, Albert. Ladders. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. 31-36.
11. Ibid. 35.
12. Of the Land Ordinance of 1784 made this clearer by using the grid. Land was divided in 6-mile square increments called townships. Within these were 36 square sections. This survey mapped the U.S. to the Mississippi River in preparation for westward expansion. Sold for one dollar / acre, the gridled land set the precedent for government policy and permeated the nation's psyche.
14. A household is defined as “one person or a group of people living in a housing unit.” In 1900 an average home contained 4.6 people where the most common household type had seven or more people. See: Hobs, Frank and Nicole Stoops. Demographic Trends in the 20th Century. U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Census Bureau. November 2002.
17. In 1847 a Hungarian doctor named Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis headed the Vienna Lying-In Hospital's two obstetrics wards. Questioning the cause of a friend's illness (contracted during an autopsy) and subsequent death, Semmelweis hypothesized that some "cadaveric material" caused pusernal fever and was contagious in some fashion. Immediately, he initiated the practice of hand and utensil washing when going from the autopsy room to the obstetric ward. The mortality rates of newborn babies immediately dropped by ten percent. The medical establishment received Semmelweis' statistical findings with a cold shoulder and for the most part ignored them. See: "Ignaz Semmelweis." Thedreaddictionary.com, 30 Sep 2004. <http://encyclopedia.thedreaddictionary.com/Ignaz%20Semmelweis>.
18. One of the more accepted defenses against disease in the mid-1800s was the control of airflow. The fear of bad air encouraged withdrawal from public life. The retreat into the domestic environment created new fears as health officials began to warn of a "familial atmosphere." This spawned a re-organization of the house, encouraging the use of individual beds and separate bedrooms. Architecture and planning is determined to be a defense against disease. Given enough windows and walls a person was safe from the public and their family. See: Corbin, Alain. The Foul and the Fragrant. New York: Berg Publishers Ltd. 1986. 162-175.
21. Ibid. 1426.
23. “This contradiction between the city and the Evangelical ideal of the family provided the final impetus for the unprecedented separation of the citizen's home from the city that is the essence of the suburban idea. The city was not just crowded, dirty, and unhealthy; it was immoral.” See: Fishman, Robert. Bourgeois Utopias. United States: Basic Books, Inc., 1987. 19-38, 38 (quote).
25. “The concept of villa ideology is rooted in the contrast of country and city, in that the virtues and delights of the one are presented as the antithesis of the vice and excesses of the other.” See: Ackerman, James S. The Villa. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. 12.
30. Ibid. 45-70.
31. Ibid. 68.
32. Ibid. 42.
39. Ibid. 87.
40. Nineteen percent of government funded, the "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways" was very effective in setting the stage for the future of the U.S. economy, but failed at fulfilling part of the function of its namesake. Designed for fourteen-foot vertical clearances, overpasses were too short to allow many defense weapons to pass beneath them unscathed. See: Hayden, Dolores. Building Suburbia. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003. 166.
43. Ibid. 144.
42. Hayden cites Joel Garreau’s book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* in defining an edge city as a “rapidly developing office and retail center with a minimum of 5,000,000 square feet of leasable office space and 600,000 square feet of leasable retail space, a place with more jobs than bedrooms.” Hayden disagrees that these should be called edge cities, and opts for the more ambiguous term edge nodes. This, though, is a denial of the evolution of cities and registers as a nostalgic reaction to save the word city and its vestigial qualities. See Hayden, Dolores. *A Field Guide to Sprawl*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004. 38-39.


49. This became more evident in a critical review with Roger Sherman. 19 Nov 2004.

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**Houston**


2. Urban area is defined as “developed area (population density more than 1,000 persons per square mile) within a metropolitan region.” See: Texas Transportation Institute. “Performance Measure Summary for Houston.” 2004 Urban Mobility Study. September 2004.


8. In the years prior to the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, the men lobbying in Washington, D.C. for highway acts were known as the “Road Gang” and “The Highwaysmen.” It was comprised of 240 representatives employed by various companies (General Motors, Standard Oil of California, and Firestone Tire and Rubber). In 1936 they formed secondary companies that formed other subsidiary companies and discreetly bought mass transit systems across the country and dismantled them. The primary companies then sold their products (buses, oil, and tires) to the cities. In the late 1940s, the companies were indicted for criminal conspiracy and fined $5,000 apiece. The companies’ presidents were assessed fines of one dollar and twenty-five cents each. See: Hayden, Dolores. *Building Suburbia*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003. 165-166. Kunstler, James Howard. *The Geography of Nowhere*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. 91-92, and Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002. 16-17.

9. I found no specific list of cities, but this gives some representation to the difficulty mass transit faces in gaining acceptance. Houston voted 52% to 48% for a $7.6 billion dollar light rail extension on November 4, 2003. The eight mile long system currently runs downtown to Reliant Stadium, hardly a viable transportation alternative for the majority of Houstonians.


15. Fat urbanism is intrinsic to stretch malls, collections of big box stores stretched along the highway. They are super-sized strip centers. Walking between stores is not an option as the passivity of window-shopping is erased. There is no question that what is desired is within one of the stores. The only thing left to do is park the car...again.


20. Ibid. 65.


25. The calorie is defined as “the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water one degree Celsius (called also large calorie)” and “a unit equivalent to the large calorie expressing heat-producing or energy-producing value in food when oxidized in the body.” See: http://www.m.m-w.com.


32. The breakdown amounts to a powerlessness that results in the destruction of one (if not both) of the two subsystems (body and or home). See: Hollier, Dennis. Against Architecture. The Writings of Georges Bataille. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998. 47.


35. Historically, as a family grew larger (in number), a simple house form could extend by replicating its existing shell. If located at all, a contemporary home’s complex rooflines and oblique walls make outward extensions difficult. See: Hols, Steven. R.P. Rural and Urban House Types in North America. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1982. 18.

36. The initial 1,000 square feet of a home are the most expensive. “You may pay about $110 a square foot for a standard three-bedroom house, but find $10 a square foot for a two-bedroom.” See: Rose, Judy. “Scarcity.” 1964. 47.


43. Leon Battista Alberti – “A house is a small city, and the city a large house.”


Coda

1. “Our ignorance only has this incalculable effect: It causes us to underrate what we could bring about in our own way, if we understood. It deprives us of the choice of the better, but leads us to act according to the blindness that might suit us. Above all, it consigns men and their works to catastrophic destructions.” Bataille, Georges. The Accursed Share. Volume 1. New York: Zone Books, 1993. 23-24.


Bibliography / Image Index

Our test of truth is a reference to either a present or imagined future majority in favour of our view.

- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.
I found the following works particularly helpful multiple times.

Books / Essays


Internet

http://www.census.gov
http://www.fedstats.gov
http://www.hardees.com
http://www.m-w.com
http://www.mapquest.com
http://www.mcdonalds.com
http://www.space.com
http://www.thefreedictionary.com

Media

Chew On This: Reasons to Go Vegetarian. Dir. Scott Whitham. 2004. DVD. PeTA.


Periodicals


**Images**

Design No. 51
Cost about $700

Size: width, 27 feet; length, 37 feet. Blue prints consist of foundation plan; floor plan; front, rear, two side elevations; wall sections and all necessary interior details.
Appendix
1909 Model No. 10

Areas (square feet):
Marketed: 1,696
Usable: 1,420

Food Prep/Consumption:
329 square feet (2.3% of usable sf)
2,963 cubic feet (23% of usable cf)
1909 Model No. 51

Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 824
Usable - 716

Food Prep/Consumption:
163 square feet (23% of usable sf)
1,226 cubic feet (23% of usable cf)
1947 Levitt Cape Cod

Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 1,500
Usable - 1,290

Food Prep/Consumption:
97 square feet (15% of usable sf)
776 cubic feet (15% of usable cf)
1950 Spec Home

Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 1,500
Usable - 1,783

Flood Prf/Consumption:
59 square feet (12% of usable sf)
795 cubic feet (12% of usable cf)
1960 Split Level Home

Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 2,100
Usable - 1,933

Food Prep/Consumption:
214 square feet (11% of usable sf)
1,786 cubic feet (12% of usable cf)
2004 Perry Homes Model No. 2368W

Areas (square feet):
Marketed: 2,368
Usable: 2,096

Flood Prep/Consumption:
389 square feet (19% of usable sf)
3,036 cubic feet (17% of usable cf)
2004 Perry Homes Model No. 2343W

Areas (square feet):
Marketed - 2,343
Usable - 1,993

Food Prep/Consumption:
351 square feet (20% of usable sf)
3,514 cubic feet (16% of usable cf)