Lake Anne Village Center Opening
December 4, 1965
Cityscape

That Reston Sure Turned the Tide

By Wolf Von Eckardt

HERE IS HOW, with luck, Reston, whose first village center was dedicated yesterday, might be described 20 years 

That is why Reston now has 75,000 inhabitants.

That they formed eventually a "settlement in the urban crisis, they turned their backs on the fast pace and modernity of the urban society. It was a time when the small town seemed more appealing to people who lived in the city. The small town provided a place where one could walk to work and where children could play on the streets.

To do so, Charles A. Goodrum's houses still stood, heavily from the early 20th century vernacular of LeCorbusier, both in their cubic forms and stiff, formal sitting. As a group, however, they provided color and variety.

Chloethiel Smith also borrowed from past associations through the use of a touch of classicism, through a pleasing one. The great strength of her cluster is the way it hugs the hillside and lake not as an imposition but as part of a gently romantic landscape.

Whittemore and Cashin seem bent to have captured the spirit of the times. Their houses are a candid expression of modern living. And this indicates man's desire for continuity in his surroundings and for warmth and friendliness.

Though these architects would never resort to faking historicism, such windows or facades, their row of houses captures the true "feel" and spirit of the Georgian vernacular at Bath far better than any of the countless George town homes built in their time.

The fact that people took to these houses and the community they formed eventually assured big industry that production not of prefabricated houses but of standard building components was worth undertaking.

Here was a basic style that industrial production could settle on, much as the automobile industry could settle on the basic form and design of the automobile in the 1920s. As a result, large corporations could now move into the housing field and overcome the rigid and costly separation of independently working architects, building product manufacturers and contractors that made housing too costly and inefficient at the time Lake Anne Village was built.

Once they had teamed up, these housing corporations could rationally design produce and construct entire communities of great variety in one quarter of the time and at one tenth of the cost in 1965.

As the 20th century draws to a close, Reston seems perhaps a bit quaint and almost overwhelmingly in its careful attention to details and cultivated prettiness. But both the town's design and the atmosphere it created have not only helped to show us the way to overcome the urban crisis. They have also stood up remarkably well.

For this reason, the reston development is considered one of the nation's most significant and original urban planning attempts. It was the first time that people thought of living in a place where they could walk to work and where children could play on the streets.
A salute to the Arts

First Village Center Opened by Reston
In ‘Salute to Arts’

By Leroy F. Aaron
Washington Post

An unusual mixture of car-nival and culture opened the first village center yesterday of the satellite city of Reston, Va.

Even the youngsters, hanging on tightly to multi-colored clown balloons, shouldn't trace, fixed during a day-long pro-gram of ballet, folk dancing, poetry reading and handbell ringing.

The “Salute to the Arts” took place in a gaily colored tent, a small auditorium and the outdoor plaza of Lake Anne Village Center, the first of seven such centers to be completed in Reston.

Not even the chilly weather could dampen the enthusiasm of the audience. The house was packed, no matter where the performers were on stage.

The performers, themselves were undeterred by the chill. Explained Claudine Ka-moun, Paris ballerina dancing with the National Ballet: “I never played a tent show before, but we are so cold that we aren’t nervous.”

Then she doffed her tight cape to go on stage in a Degas-like ballet costume in the un-heated tent.

Besides the National Ballet, there were the Potomac English Handbell Ringers, the Wil-kerson Foundation Choir, the Ly-wn String Quartet and the Davis Dance Playhouse. There was also a restaurant in operation in a heated tent.

The seven village centers will serve as a focal point for shopping and community life.

Lake Anne Village Center, which opened yesterday, is built around a man-made lake. It has a pier and a plaza, remem-biring one of St. Mark’s Square in Venice, Italy. In the plaza’s center stands a stone fountain.

Three of the plaza’s sides are bordered by shops with apartments above them. For those who found the fare insufficient at the outdoor chuck wagon near the tent, there was a restaurant in operation yesterday on the plaza.

Also open for business were a dry cleaners, barber shop, hardware store and hair stylist, with a private key club, also on the plaza.

First Village Center

One on the Aisle

Carnegie Hall To Reston, Va.

By Richard L. Coe

It might seem that Reston’s developer, Robert E. Simon Jr. is jumping on the fashionable cultural bandwagon—or might be just fresh from Changing Times’ current piece on “The Culture Boom.” No, Simon’s always been with it.

A week from today Virginia’s “new town” will be inaugurating the opening of its first village center with a “Salute to the Arts,” employing such fancy luminaries as August Heckscher, Stephen Spender and a covey of the area’s performing arts groups.

A jaded observer might excusably suspect that this is but another ploy in the currently raging Arts Game, affluency’s outgrowth of the old Shell Game.

But in this case, I suspect not. Fortethyl, Simon is a school of the Simon and Schuster publishing firm, for some years was president of Carrei-gie Hall and keeps up with Upper Culture intrigues by maintaining a Manhattan base while implementing our local City of the Future.

“We will have 1200 res-idents by January,” observes the soft-spoken developer, “and another ploy in the cur-rency’s outgrowth of the old Shell Game.”

Among the attractions: Frederik Franklin, Claudine Kamo-nou, Ivan Navy of the National Ballet, Evelyn Davis Dance Playhouse, Claire Greer’s and Stephen Meroff’s McLean Ballet, the Backus Puppets, Dave Rosenberg’s Washington Folk Dance Group, the Wilker-son Foundation Choir, the Washing-ton Press Quartet, the Potomac English Handbell Ringers and a slice of “The Boy Friend” by Catherine University’s speech and drama department.

Now poetry consultant of the Library of Congress, Ste-phen Spender will read from his own works at 3 in the Community Center and, at 4, Heckscher, former consultan-t on the arts to President Kennedy, will be principal speaker at the area’s official dedication.

PAS DE TROIS: Ready for the Salute to the Arts program at Reston, Va., next Saturday are (from left) Nancy Miller, Rory Woodsmance and Maureen McGuire, one of the participating groups.
A New Village Springs to Life

By DANIEL POOLE
Star Real Estate Editor

New ideas and the arts often go together. But it isn't every day that it happens in real estate.

At Reston, however, the land planning and community development represent the latest ideas in "new town" construction. And the first village center will be opened tomorrow with a "Salute to the Arts."

Known as Lake Anne Village Center, it is the first of seven similar centers planned at the huge Reston site off Route 7 in Fairfax County.

The new village center is located on the shores of Lake Anne. It contains the J-shaped Washington Plaza shopping center, above which are the Plaza Apartments. Other apartments are in the 15-story Heron House and at Quayside House along the lake's boardwalk.

The shopping center contains a Safeway Store, Lakeside Pharmacy, Meeting Restaurant, Quay Club, community center, Rathkeller, Vienna Trust Co., McLean Youngland and Variety Children's Shop, Julie Hair stylist, Gudrun Scandinavian Furniture, Cardwright, Western and Southern Life Insurance Co., Gallagher Dry Cleaners, Doer Brothers Art Suppliers, Tom's Barber Shop, Meenehan's Hardware, the office of attorney Paul Scanlon and a branch of the Fairfax County Library.

The Lake Anne Village Center also has three groups of town houses, a 18-hole golf course, a swimming pool and other recreation facilities. Single-family homes on individual lots also are being built throughout the community.

Robert E. Simon Jr., developer of Reston and former president of Carnegie Hall in New York City, said of the event:

"This is the first time in my knowledge that a village center has been opened with a tribute to the arts. We are doing this because one of the concepts underlying the creation of Reston is that its residents should be provided with the opportunity for a good life and the enjoyment of the finer things of life. Moreover, the residents of Reston intend the arts to play a prominent role in community life."

The Lake Anne Village Center contains many town houses located at lakeside. The "new town" has other groups of town houses, as well as single-family homes and a variety of recreation facilities.

The New Washington Plaza shopping center opens tomorrow at Reston as the village center is dedicated.
The opening of Reston's first village center, which blossoms in an idyllic, dreamlike setting in Northern Virginia, attracted more than 12,000 visitors yesterday.

At first glance, the new town is a bit awesome in its dramatic promise as a prototype city of the future. Everywhere one turns there's more a feeling of creation than of bulldozers, and August Hecksher, former presidential adviser on the arts, was almost poetic about what he saw laid out before him around a 30-acre lake.

Fittingly, since Reston residents intend the arts to play a prominent role in community life, the dedication of the village in Fairfax County's fox-hunting countryside not only attracted Hecksher but British poet Stephen Spender as well.

Fitting Ceremonies

Spender, consultant in poetry at the Library of Congress, recited his poetry while Hecksher observed later at the opening of the Lake Anne Village Center, "It seems wonderful that this opening should be accompanied by the sound of bells and take place amid music, plays and poetry readings."

Speaking at the lakeside plaza under a bright October sky filled with wind, he noted: "The square where we are gathered, all traffic excluded, the lake penetrating to its heart, the shops and apartments clustered closely round while a little beyond, the strict urban architecture gives way to houses more informally sited... is the epitome of what men and women have conceived as a fit setting for community life."

Hecksher, director of the Twentieth Century Fund, said Lake Anne Village will play its part in the making of the next America. "Something of Reston will carry over into all the experiments in better living which men undertake henceforth."

Auto Is Domesticated

Here, he added, "the automobile is domesticated and put where it belongs. That is no small thing in itself. But even more important is the symbolic fact that in this new city the human being is recognized as being—where always he should be—in top place, the king of the walk."

An estimated 12,000 persons came and went during a day that brought the modern village to life with a unique "Salute to the Arts" staged in a peppermint-striped festival tent.

The program included the McLean Ballet, the Rockie Puppets and Salmian Claus, the David Rosenberg Folk Dancers who danced everything from a Polish polka to a Kansas Bush, the Washington Brass Quartet who serenaded the crowds with "Music for Queen Mary II" while balloons popped, and the Catholic University Drama Group prefacing "The Boy Friend" Charleston to the ballet numbers of Paris ballerinas Claudine Kamoun and Ivan Nagy, premier dancer of the National Ballet.

Other entertainment included the Peteterae English Handbell Singers, the Evelyn Davis Dance Theater, the Lowen String Quartet and the Wilson Foundation Choir.

The developer of the huge site, Robert E. Simon Jr., former president of Carnegie Hall, guided some visitors through the village center that houses a library, shops, a community center, and an outdoor bandstand.

Six Other Centers Set

Homes range in price from $25,000 to $50,000, with apartments available from $125 a month to $200. Six other village centers are planned for Virginia's "new towns" which Interior Secretary Stewart Udall has called "the most exciting thing in city development in a generation."

Among the community programs to begin as Reston attempts to fulfill its promise as a city of the future will be the Lake Anne Center Film Series.

Starting next month, the series will be at 8 p.m. on Thursdays and divided into classics of the English language, foreign language, English language comedy and "Music of the World."


Other activities at Reston's Lake Anne Village includes an 18-hole golf course, tennis, swimming, boating and fishing.
Address by August Heckseber

The sound of bells...

Address by August Heckseber
Director, The Twentieth Century Fund
At the Opening of the Lake Anne Village Center
Reston, Virginia, December 4, 1985

It seems wonderfully fitting that this opening of the first village center of Reston should be accompanied by the sound of bells and take place amid music, plays and poetry readings. What we have here celebrating today is the beginning of a community. And the true community cannot exist without experiences which give delight to the spirit.

Cities have their beginning in different ways. Some grow up because a juncture of two modes of transportation requires special services and activities. Some grow because they are close to a source of raw materials. But at the heart of all cities there must be a dream: and the crown upon every good city is the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

Reston has had its dream. It was largely the dream of one man—Mr. Robert Simon. But from today on, others weave the dream into the fabric of their lives, making the vision their own and sharing hope for its future. And now, as we see, Reston has as well its crown of music and poetry.

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony, The universal frame began."

If we cannot claim as our pride strains as the origin of this little village nestled in the Virginia countryside, we can at least say that its opening day was marked by many pleasurable sights and sounds.

What shall we add about Reston and its meaning for our land and times? Let me say three things very briefly.

First, we see here a brave and deliberate design to create a community out of whole cloth. That is not an easy or a commonplace thing. There is a mystery at the heart of it, and I dare say no one, not even Mr. Simon, is quite sure of all the answers. You take good land, and the power of wealth brought together from diverse sources, and many skills, and toil, and a sense of beauty: you add people, and you sit by hoping that the result will be the marvelously complex and subtle creation of a living organism.

Indeed I hazard the opinion that the miracle of common life is almost as strange as that other miracle which scientists hope one day to achieve—the miracle of individual life wrought in a test tube.

Here, to an extraordinary degree, are the things that should make city life rewarding. This square where we are gathered, all traffic excluded, the lake penetrating to its heart, the shops and apartments clustered closely around while a little beyond, the strict urban architecture gives way to homes more informally sited; the square, with its happy rhythm and with the sense of open countryside not too far off—it is the epitome of what men and women have conceived as a fit setting for community life. Will it work? Does it represent in its fulfillment what men and women have really desired?

We can believe today that the miracle has been pulled off—that the stones of this place have in fact become alive. And if our belief proves justified as the months and years go by, the fact will be of immense significance to the country as a whole.

Men to come will build differently, according to different tastes and to the varying demands which land and climate make upon them. Other sparks will light other fires. But this Lake Anne Village will play its part in the making of the next America: something of Reston will carry over into all the experiments in better living which men undertake henceforth.

So the first point I want to make is that we are learning to create new life in new towns. The second is that we are recapturing here something which the modern world tends to erode and dissipate: the sense of pace, the feeling that man’s lives exist within a frame which helps give meaning to what they do and plan.

The world around us becomes increasingly vague, homogeneous, faceless and placeless. The older cities sprawl and dribble, until it becomes difficult to know where one begins and where the other ends—even more difficult to say where the city gives way to the countryside. Modern man, as a result, doesn’t really know where he is or where he is going. In the end he isn’t sure who he is.

And now look about you: is there any doubt but that this is Reston, that we stand in Lake Anne Village? It is a place with its own character and identity. No man coming here will ever doubt that he has arrived. That tall building across the way marks the spot, as surely as the church steeple of the New England village told the traveller who was coming near his destination. As Reston grows, it will keep its scale, its sense of bounds and limits. Within it will be the villages which a child shall call his own, which a man or woman shall know as home.

It is just possible that this feeling for a recognizable place will seem anachronism in tomorrow’s world. Perhaps Los Angeles is the pattern of the future. Perhaps men and women will grow so used to drifting about, their antennae tuned to omnipresent sounds and impulses, that the sense of something rooted, something fixed and defined, will pass from them. I do not think this will happen. My own belief is that Reston stands for a quality which men will long reaffirm as necessary to the communities they live in.

Finally, I would say that Reston stands for the ascendency of the human element over the technological. This is a place: it is a place made for men and women—shaped to satisfy their needs and desires. Opportunities for employment will develop here, of course. But “ours is no workaday city merely.” It is Pericles speaking about another community, in another age of man. So Reston is not for work only, but for the growth of the human personality in its variety and fullness—through recreation, through the arts, through civic activities, through contact with an unspoiled environment.

Let me give you just one point of contrast between a community made for men and one made to appease the machine. It is the way the automobile is treated. The average community of today is subservient to the automobile; all the vital choices are made in its interest, not the interest of human beings.

The car moves—when it moves at all—at the price of mortal danger to the pedestrian.

The car is parked—at the price of tearing holes in the closely woven fabric of urban life—leaving dead spaces where there should be life and trade.

The car is provisioned at the price of creating the eyesore of the contemporary gas station.

And sold at the price of downgrading whole neighborhoods.

And finally disposed of at the hideous cost of making junkyards the very sight of which is enough to crush the spirit.

Here, by contrast, the automobile is domesticated and put where it belongs. That is no small thing in itself. But even more important is the symbolic fact that in this new city the human being is recognized as being—where always he should be—in top place, the king of the walk.

And so I close. The light of this day fades. But Lake Anne Village will have many days: let us hope that for all who come here, and all who live here, they may be good days.