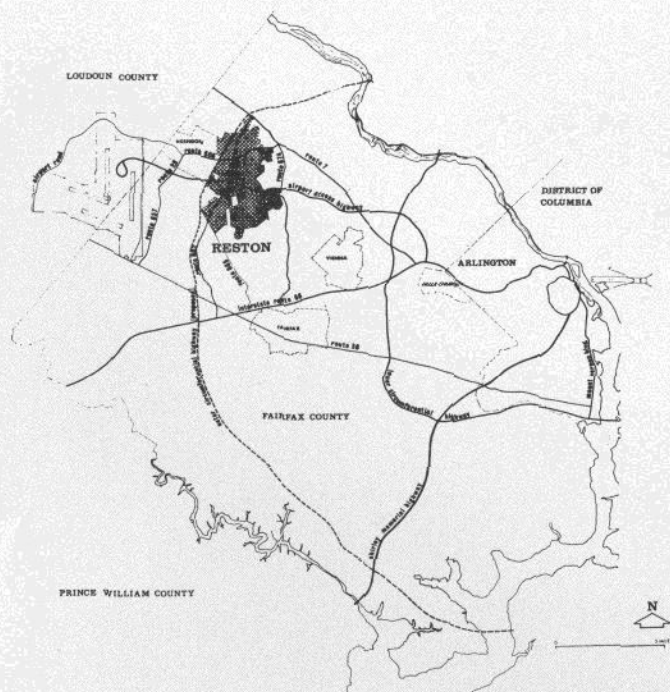


A view of the First Village Center at Reston looking toward the lake

# RESTON

An Answer to Suburban Sprawl: Urban Living in the Country

Reston, Virginia, which will eventually house some 75,000 people on a wooded tract about 17 miles from Washington, D.C. is a satellite new town planned in terms of cluster development, which, in itself, would make it of considerable interest to the architectural profession. Reston, however, has the added importance of being a community, embracing the highest planning and architectural standards, financed completely as a profit-making private enterprise. The future of Reston will therefore be watched with great interest by architects and planners, who will be hoping for a clear demonstration that the highest design standards are also good economics.



Reston lies athwart the Dulles Airport access highway 17 miles from Washington, D.C. *Right:* The Reston Master Plan. Highway and railroad bisect the site from east to west, route 601 runs from north to south. The point of intersection determines the town center. "Density sinews," areas with 60 persons to the acre, wind through the site, are broken into seven village centers

The new town is a familiar concept which now has taken on a new importance. The population explosion and the widespread use of the automobile have made it both more urgent and more feasible to spin off the growth of our major metropolitan areas into separate self-contained communities. There are presently about 75 new towns planned or under construction in various parts of the country and at least 46 American examples of planning by the theory of cluster development, which takes the new town principle of concentrating population in clearly defined areas and applies it to the design of housing.

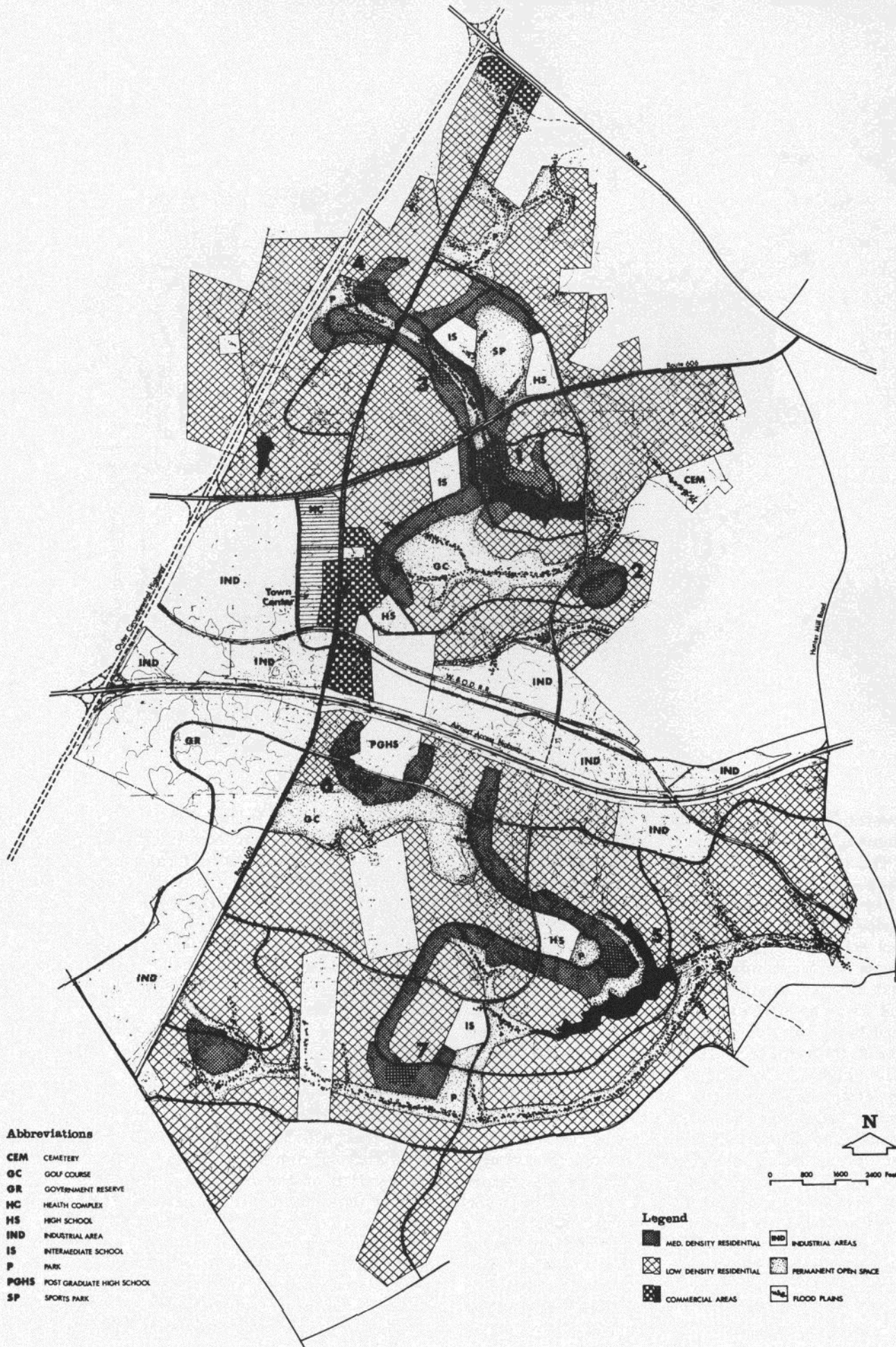
The developer of Reston is a corporation headed by a New York real estate investor named Robert E. Simon Jr. (his initials form the first syllable of the town's name) who had become interested in the potentialities of large-scale development and had already been an unsuccessful bidder on another large tract in the Washington area when the Reston land came on the market. The 10-square-mile site of Reston had been held in single ownership since the 18th century by the distillers of a famous brand of bourbon, who used the woods as a source of lumber for barrel staves. It lies athwart the highway that connects Washington to Dulles Airport and is only

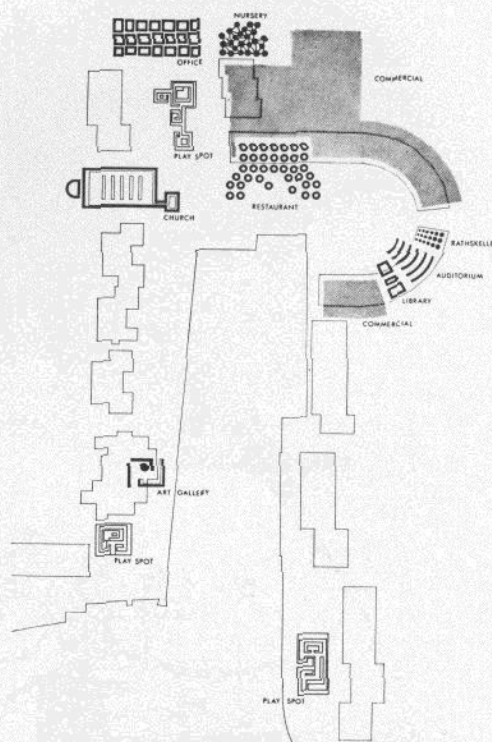
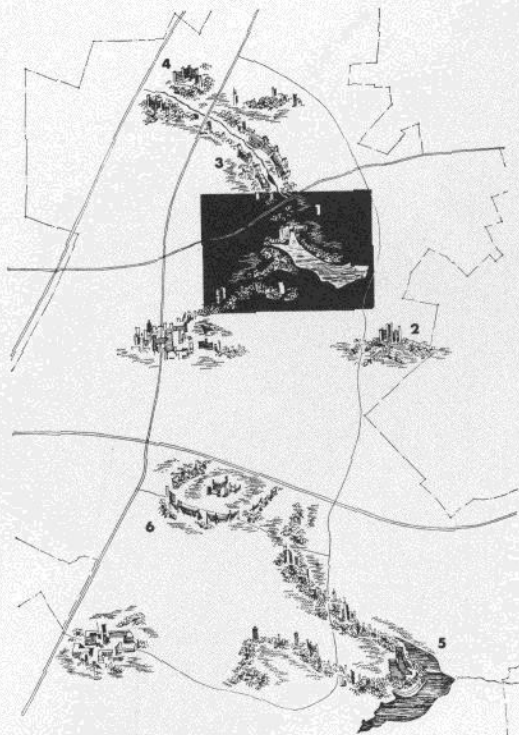
17 miles from the center of the city. It is therefore almost a self-evident location for a satellite town, and the land had already been so designated in the advisory Year 2000 Plan prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council.

A study prepared for Simon by Arthur D. Little, Inc. convinced him that the site, topography, prospective population and future economic growth all indicated that developing the tract as a planned community for 75,000 persons would be a sound investment. Accordingly the firm of Whittlesey and Conklin was retained to draw up a master plan.

Although Simon is a firm believer in securing, and following, expert advice, a number of his own ideas probably served his planners as a brief. Simon himself is an enthusiast of sports and of the outdoor life, and he feels very strongly that people who move to the country should be able to enjoy its benefits. He therefore did not want the growth of Reston to destroy the very rural amenities that its residents would seek. At the same time, as a private investor without any governmental support, he could not afford to succumb to the temptation of telling people how to live. For this reason, Reston must have far







greater diversity and flexibility of growth than, for example, a new town like Stevenage in England.

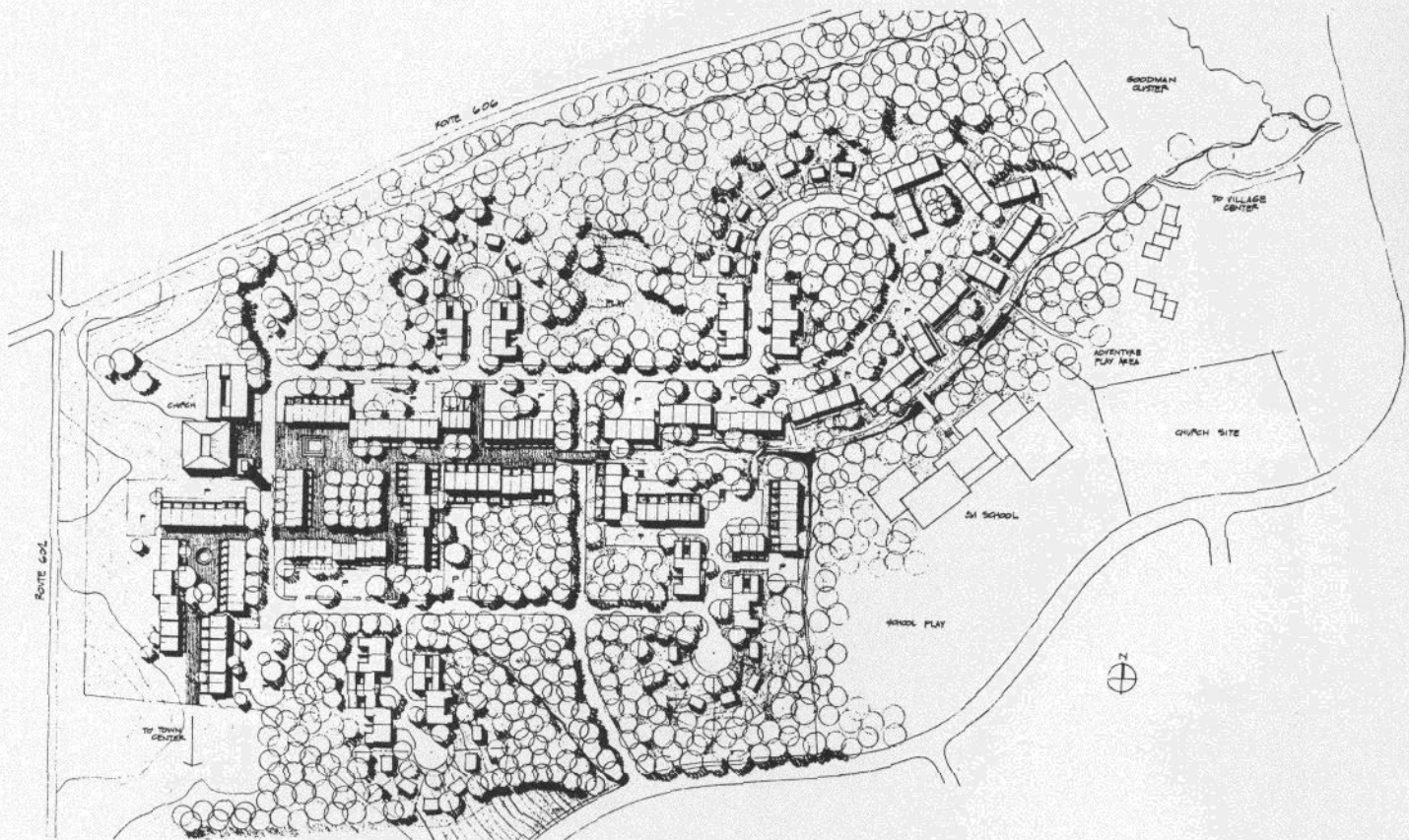
The site of Reston is 6,750 acres of gently rolling woodland. Three water courses, a lake, and the many small hills and valleys give it a pleasantly varied character. In essence, the master plan for this tract is extremely simple. The Dulles Airport access highway and a railroad bisect the site from east to west. Route 602 runs from north to south, and its point of intersection with highway and railroad is the location of the future main town center. Also from north to south run what William Conklin calls "high-density sinews" of housing, surrounded by lower density housing and areas set aside for parks, recreation and various community functions. Land along the airport highway has been reserved for light industry and government offices. Automobile circulation is by loop roads around the periphery of each area; pedestrian circulation by walkways to, and through, the high density sinews.

The high density areas break down into seven smaller village centers, each related to a distinctive feature of the topography. (See drawing top of this page.) The first village center, which is now under construction, is being built around a hollow which

has been converted to an artificial lake. The village centers will serve for convenience shopping, but they are also planned to be focal points of community life and activity. The drawing (*above right*) indicates the range of facilities envisaged for the first village center. The high density areas will house 60 persons per acre in town houses and high-rise apartments, whose urban character will be set off against lakes and surrounding woodlands. Clusters of town houses at a density of 14 people to the acre will be related to the centers in the high-density sinews by pedestrian walkways, which will also relate the village centers to each other.

For those people who do not wish to live in an apartment or town house, house lots are available in areas that will have a density of 3.8 persons per acre. Each lot comes with a deed restriction limiting the location of the house and the placement of a service building such as a garage. The purpose of these restrictions is to insure that no house is built in a position where it blocks the best view of any other house. A number of these lots have already been placed on the market. Some have been sold to builders who are planning small tracts of speculative housing, others to individuals. (So far, no one





has complained about the deed restrictions.)

A total of 914 acres of land is reserved for developments that will provide employment for the residents. It is hoped that eventually a large proportion of those who live in Reston will also work there.

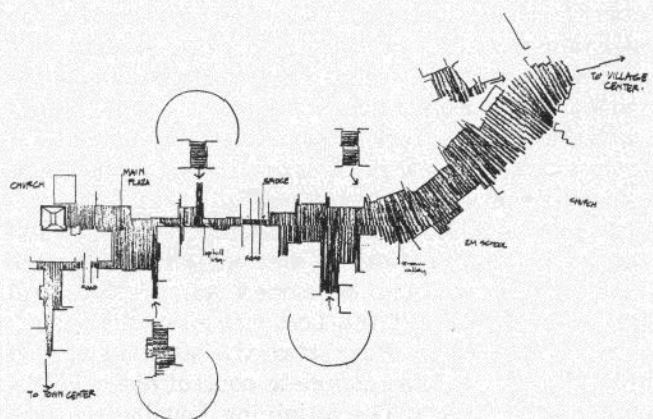
Recreation areas will be developed around each town center, and there will be golf courses and tennis courts available on a club basis. The total land area devoted to recreation and open space will be about 1,500 acres, or approximately 20 acres per 1,000 inhabitants.

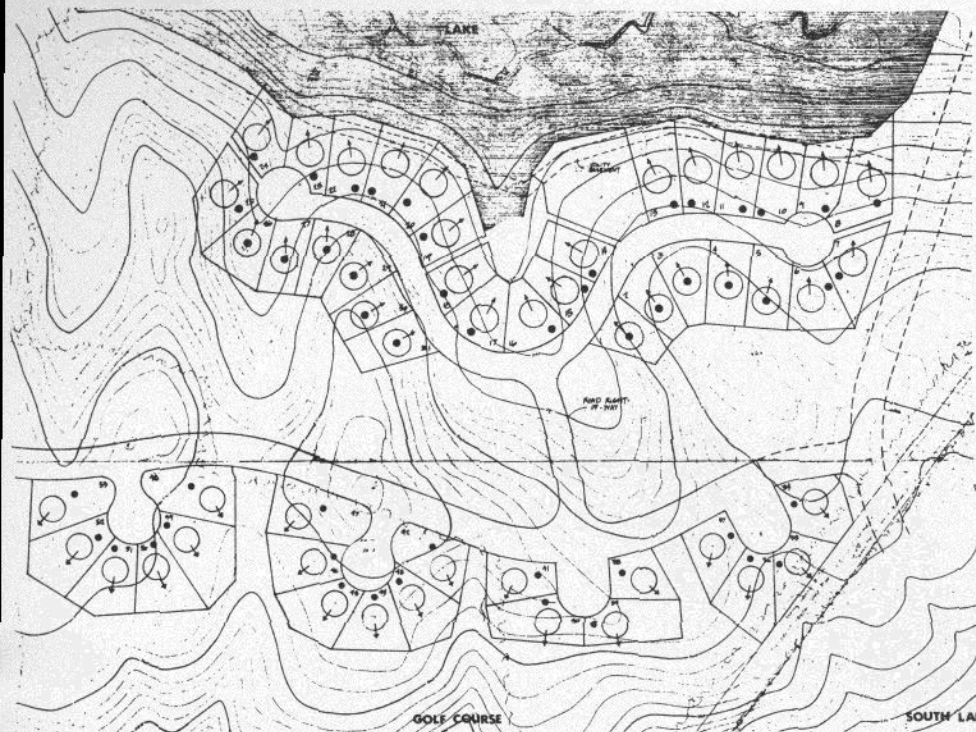
As this area of Fairfax County originally had two-acre zoning, it was necessary to seek a change in the law to permit clustering at the desired densities. Accordingly the planners developed with the county a model density zoning ordinance, which they called R.P.C. Zoning, Zoning for a Residential Planned Community.

In their description of the ordinance Whittlesey and Conklin made the following points:

1. By keeping the net lot area assigned to each individual housing facility to a practical minimum, R.P.C. Zoning permits a higher proportion of land to be devoted to public use. Density zoning permits combining the open space normally associated with

Whittlesey and Conklin have sought to devise new methods of planning notation. *Across-page left:* A drawing of the seven village centers that run through Reston with their character sketched in three dimensions. *Across-page right:* A diagram of the first village center indicating various types of community facilities. *Above:* A site plan of cluster housing, made before the area is assigned to an architect. *Below:* A space diagram of the same area





*Left:* Lots are also for sale in Reston. They are laid out following the principles of cluster development, and restrictions in the deed determine that the major part of the house must be within the circle and a service building, such as a garage, should be located at the dot. The purpose of these restrictions is to preserve the views, indicated by arrows

*At right:* Studies for road signs, street signs and house numbers by Chermayeff and Geismar Associates, who have been retained as graphic consultants to Reston. *At far right:* Designs for lighting fixtures and studies of lighting character for Reston by Seymour Evans Associates, who are the lighting consultants

each building type into common space more usable and attractive for the community as a whole.

2. R.P.C. Zoning permits the mixture of housing and commercial uses, and the introduction of high-rise buildings in close conjunction with courtyard houses, town houses and other building types.

3. R.P.C. Zoning makes possible the separation of vehicular and pedestrian circulation, providing safer travel for children to and from school and easy pedestrian access to shops and facilities.

4. In low density development R.P.C. Zoning permits the clustering of dwelling units, creating a far more open appearance and preserving trees.

A new ordinance embodying these provisions was passed by Fairfax County, which has a very progressive planning commission. It now remains to be seen whether this type of urban living in the country will be accepted by the public.

The responsibility of the planners at Reston extends to the production of detailed studies of each area, considered and developed in architectural terms. In the case of the first village center, Wittlesey and Conklin were also the architects, and were able to exercise complete control over the design at every stage. The adjoining housing clusters

were designed by other architects, but the co-ordination was very close. The drawing on page 123 shows one of the planning studies for a third housing cluster related to the first village center which was done before the area was assigned to architects. Wittlesey and Conklin have been experimenting with new types of planning notation, like the space diagram of this area shown at bottom of page 123.

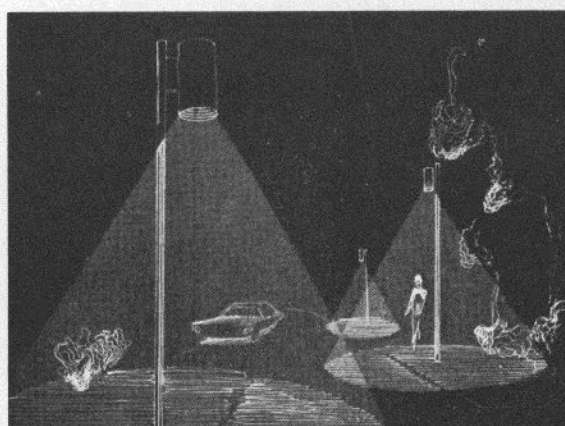
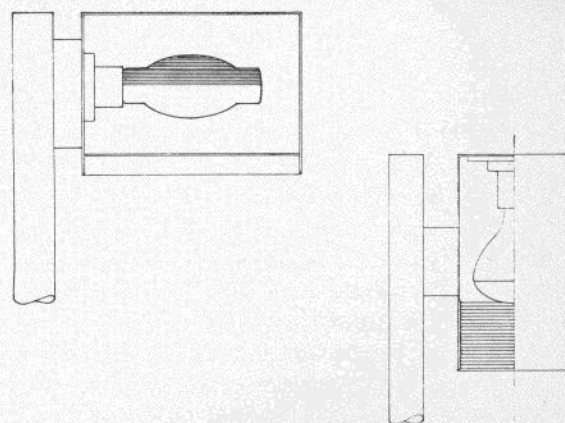
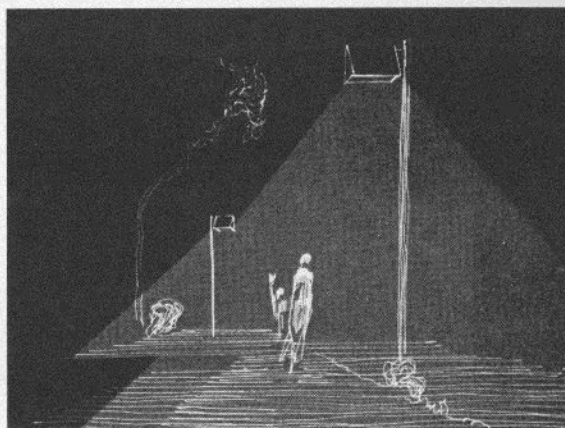
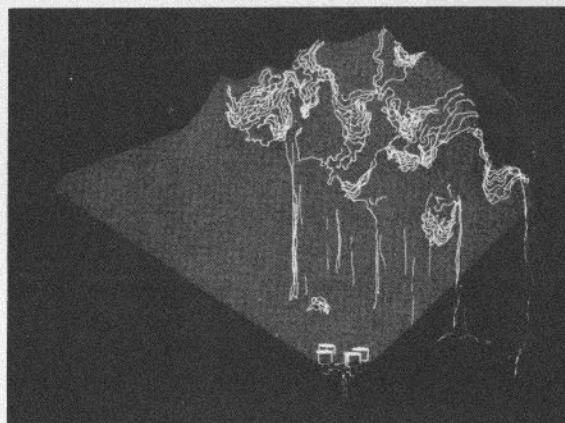
The planners also suggested the retention of consultants to produce consistent over-all design for Reston's graphics, lighting and street furniture. Chermayeff and Geismar Associates are responsible for designing and co-ordinating road signs, street signs, house numbers and even the markers on the golf courses. Seymour Evans Associates have envisaged the lighting of public areas as a series of related experiences. The roadways will be lit by floodlighting the trees along the edge of the road, and the distance back from the edge will be varied to create a variety of vistas. Different types of downlighting will be used in the pathways and in parking lots to create overlapping pools of light, and in the town centers the overhangs of the buildings will be floodlit with supplementary lighting of similar quality to gas lamps.





Private financing, although it requires the development of Reston to proceed in stages, has the advantage of insuring that the design of the town is closely attuned to the needs of the public. The developers' attitude could be characterized throughout as a desire to plant rather than to plan. The first building in the industrial area will offer rental space to light industry on a "seedbed" basis. As the industries grow and take hold, they will be able to purchase building sites and construct larger quarters. Similarly, tennis courts and golf courses will be offered on a membership basis—as the demand increases, more will be built. Other community facilities will be encouraged, but they will also be voluntary and self-supporting. The relative success of each housing type may change the present housing ratio of 70 per cent town houses and 15 per cent each of apartments and lots by the time the next village center is ready to be built.

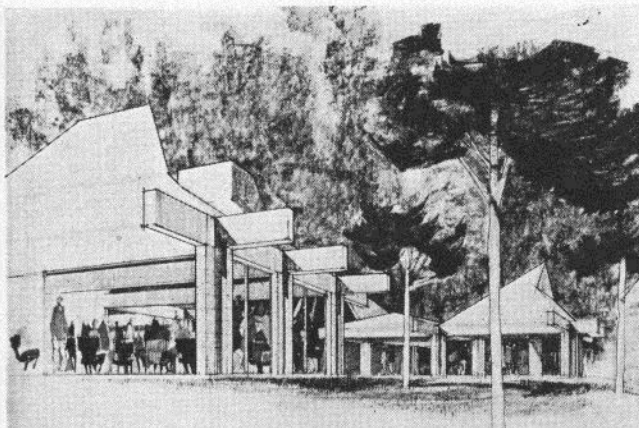
It amuses Robert Simon that "the longhairs who usually endorse only a limited profit for a developer" all hope that Reston will prove a great financial success. But surely, if ever a speculative development deserved to make a handsome profit, that development is Reston.



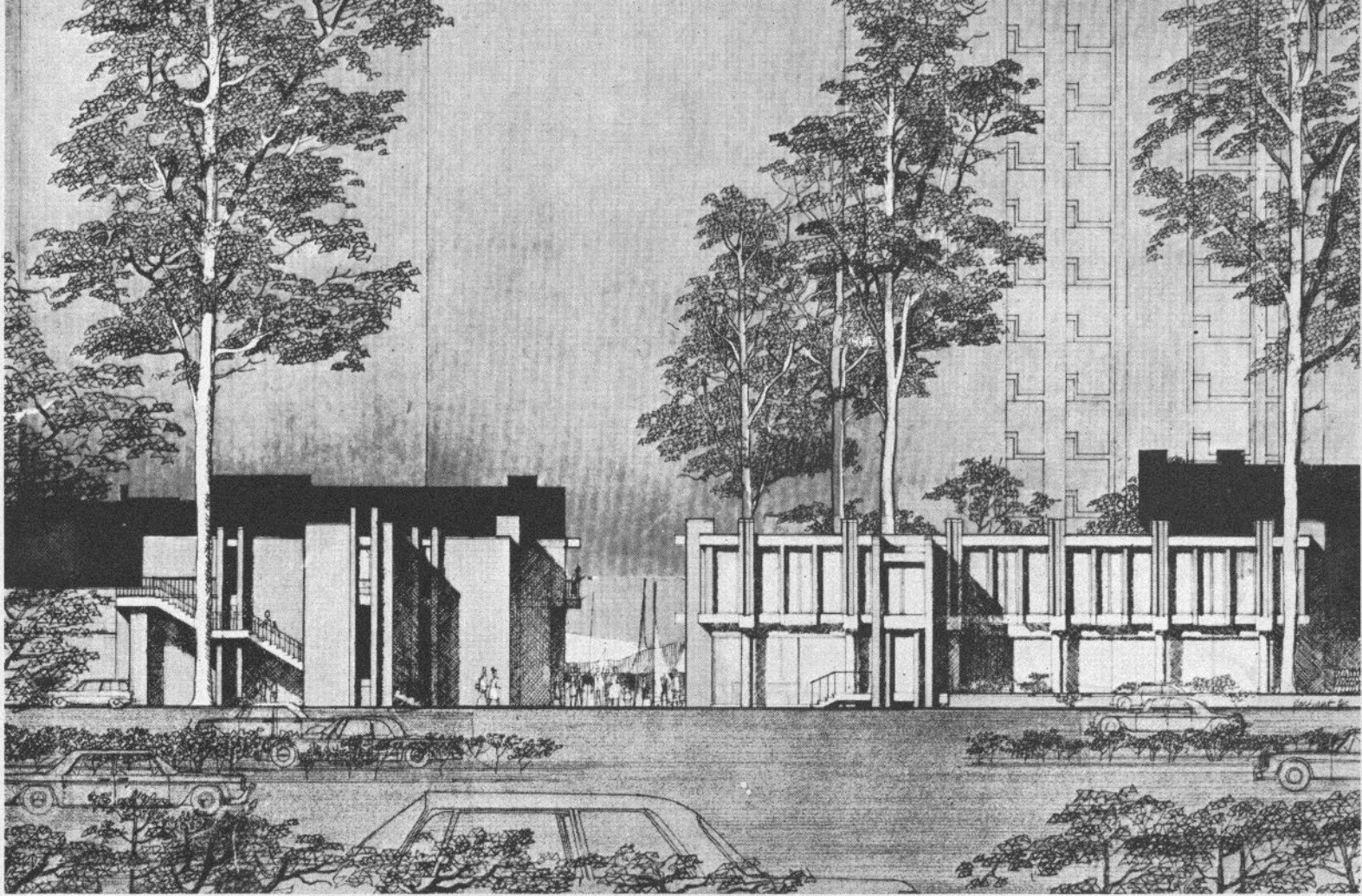


*Above:* The aerial view of the model shows the First Village Center and the related clusters of housing which are described on the following pages

*Below:* Sketch for a golf club building being designed by Charles M. Goodman Associates





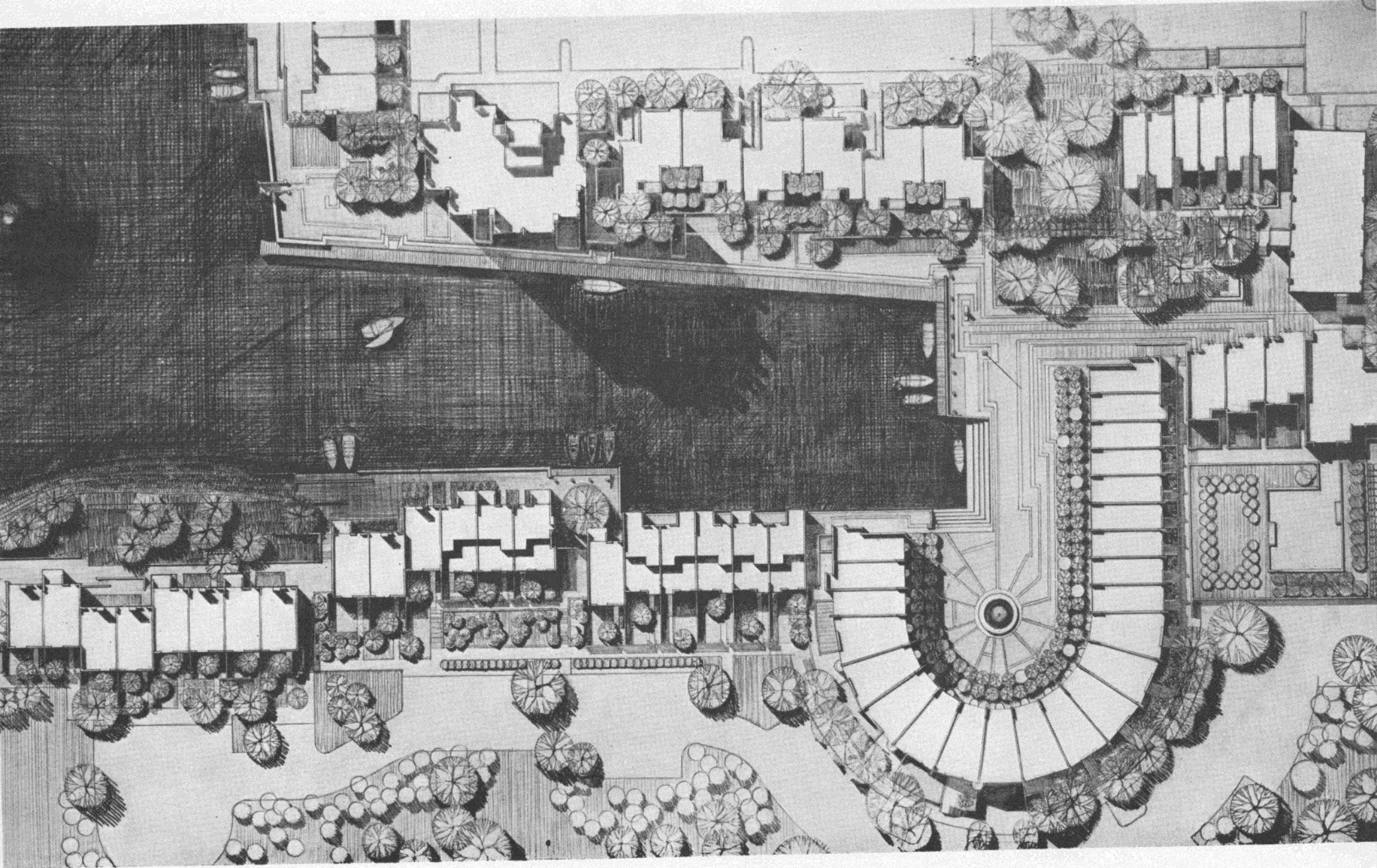


## THE FIRST VILLAGE CENTER

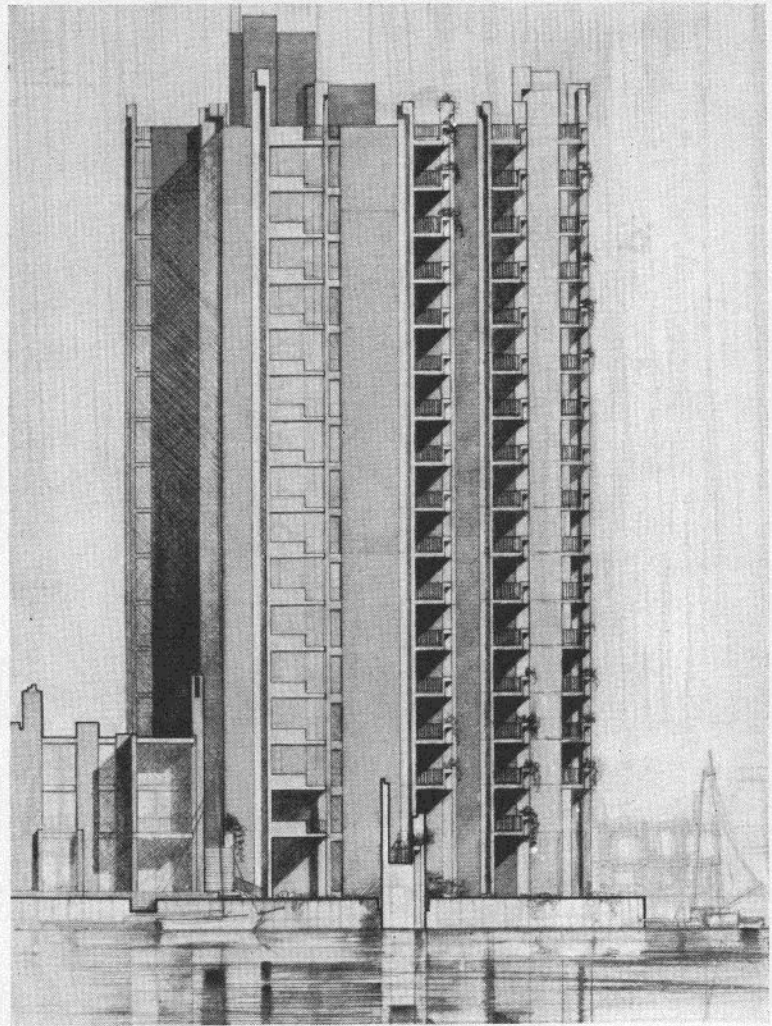
ARCHITECTS: *Whittlesey and Conklin*

The First Village Center is designed to be as lively and as urbane a place as possible. A conscious effort has been made to infuse it with the excitement and atmosphere of a downtown area. Convenience shopping and community facilities are concentrated around a semi-circular plaza, along with a number of apartments and studios over the stores. The high-rise block at the head of the lagoon provides apartments for single people and small households, who can be expected to enjoy the convenience of living in the center, while overlooking the lake and the surrounding woods. The owners of many of the town houses will be able to tie up their boats outside their front doors, which should add further color and movement to the scene.



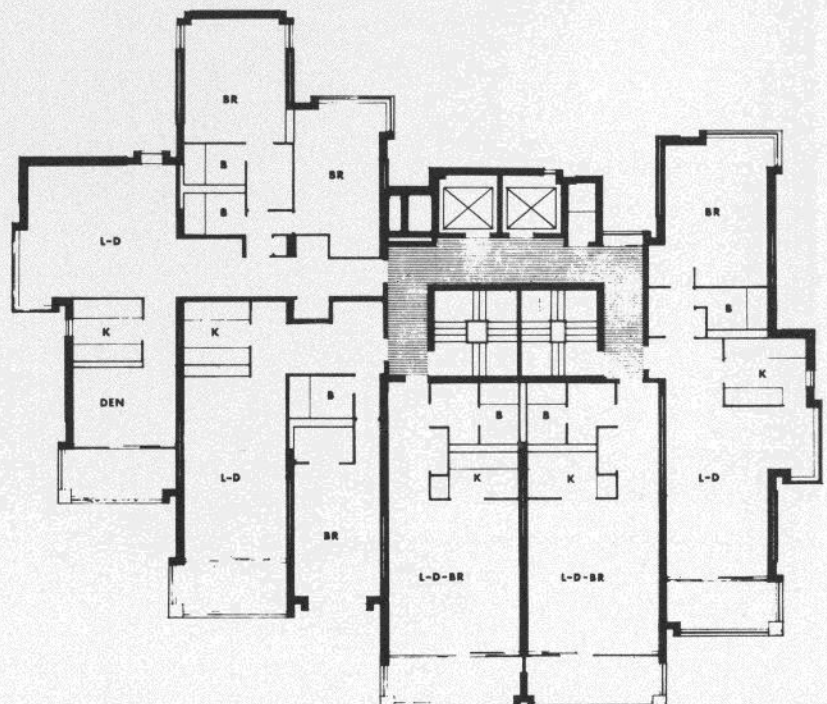




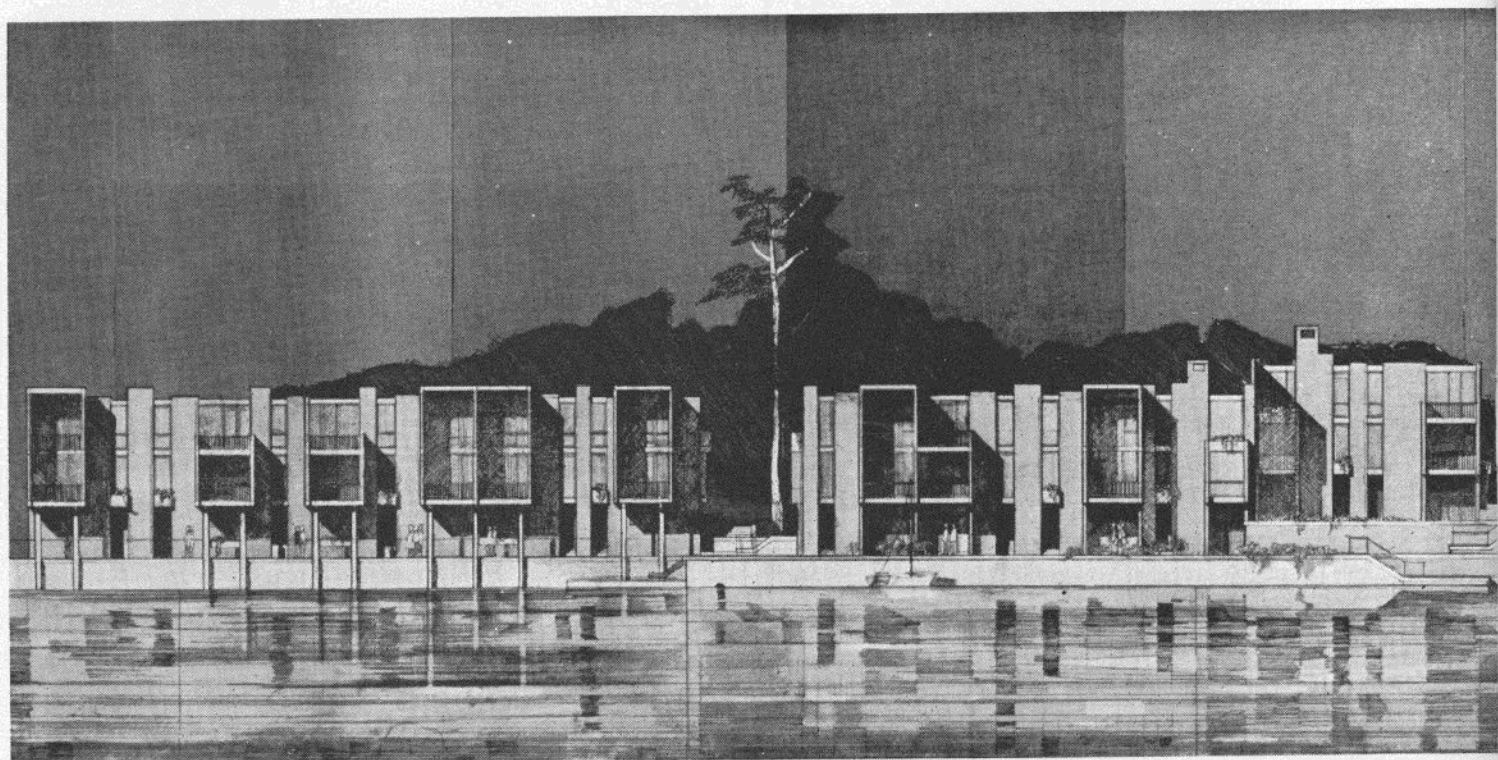
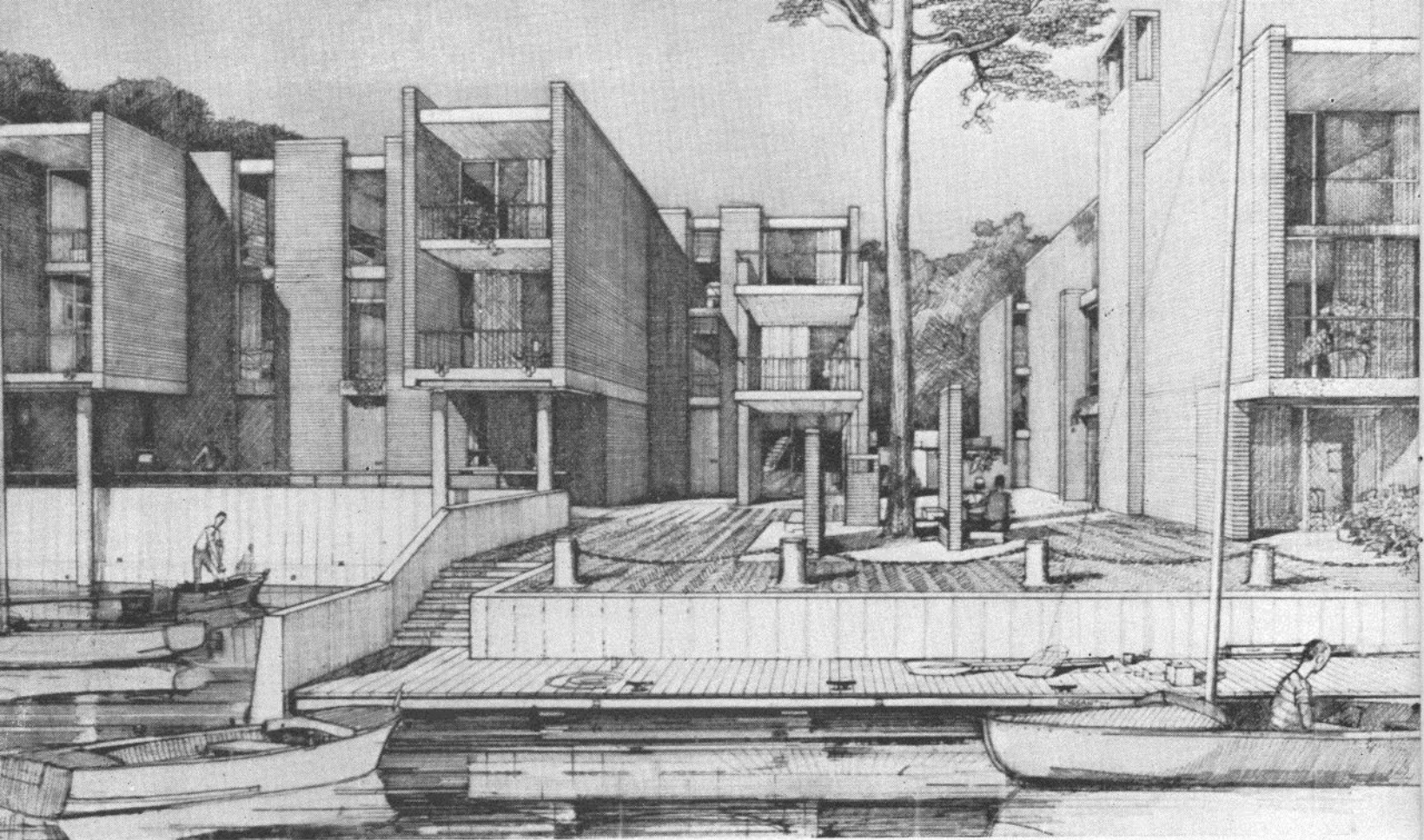


## FIRST VILLAGE CENTER

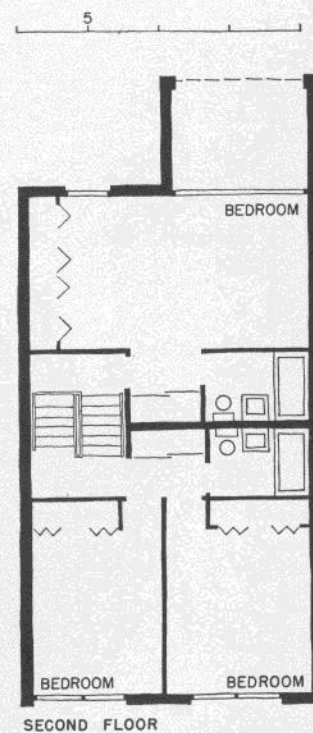
*Left:* Plan of the First Village Center. The actual commercial and community center lies around the semi-circular plaza at the top of the drawing. The lake is formed into a lagoon and brought right into the heart of the area. *Right:* A typical floor plan and a side elevation of the high-rise block at the head of the lagoon





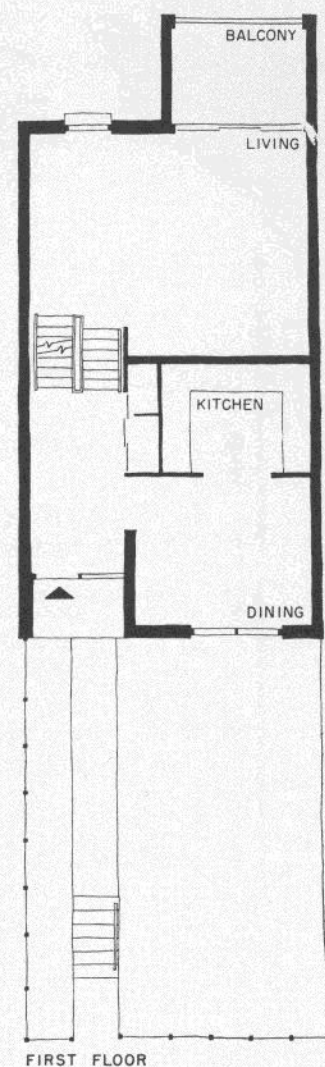
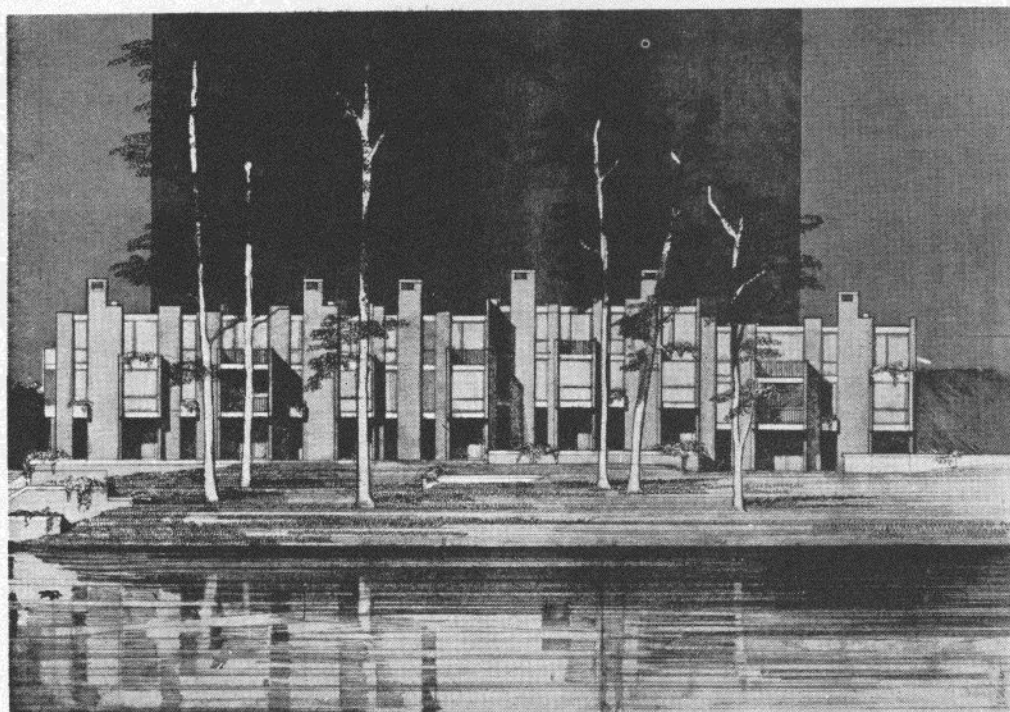


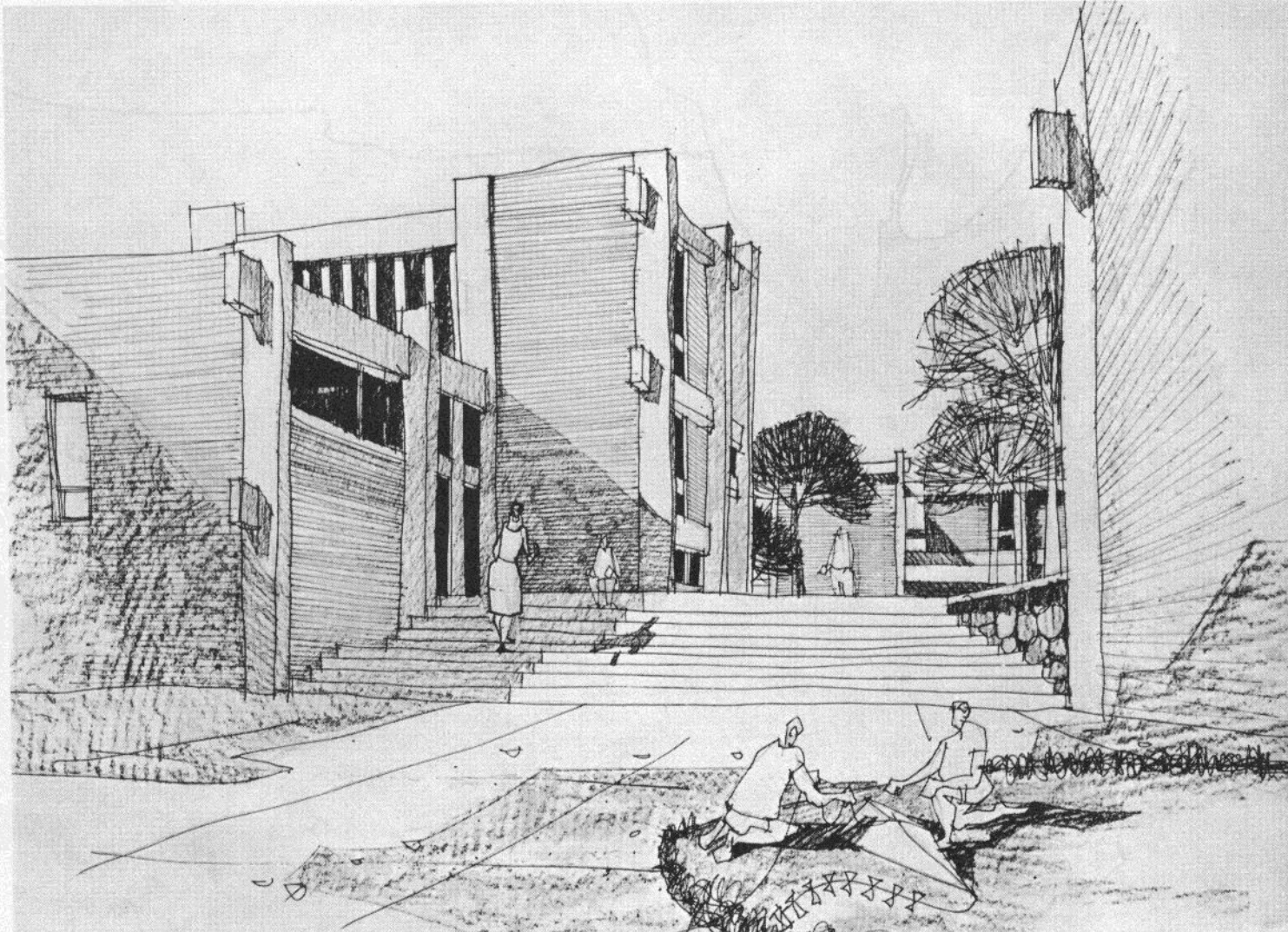




# FIRST VILLAGE CENTER

*Below:* Elevation of the town houses opposite the high-rise block. *Left:* The perspective gives a good idea of their character and their close relation to the lake



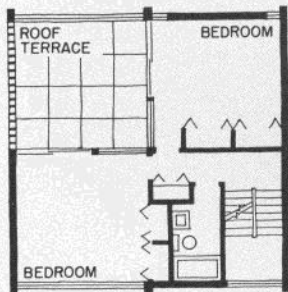
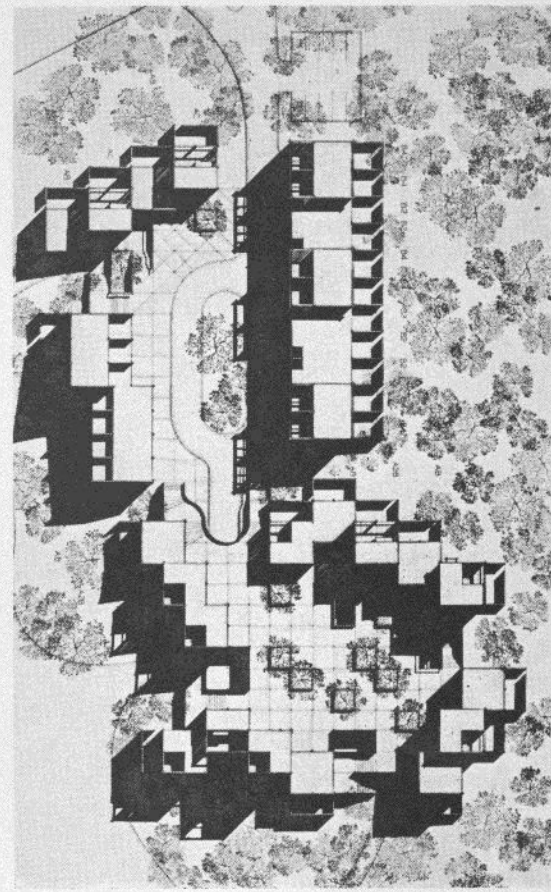
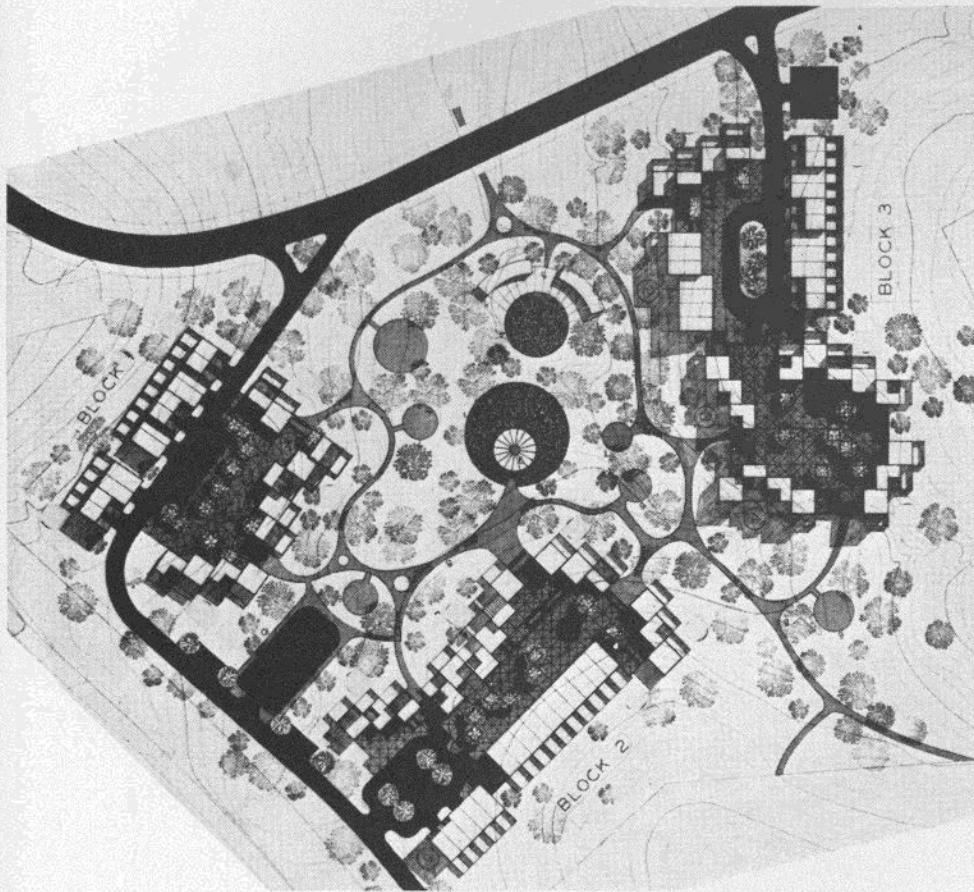


## THE HILL CLUSTER

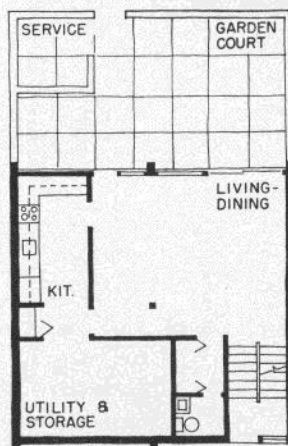
ARCHITECT: *Charles M. Goodman Associates*

The Hill Cluster is comprised of three smaller clusters grouped around a central common. As the central space is naturally a flood plain, the landscaping employs the water courses on the site to form circular pools at different levels on the hillside, each pool being retained by a low stone dam. In addition there is a central area for community events and play areas, picnic areas and the like. The sloping site has been utilized to provide a covered garage under two of the clusters, the roof of the garage thus becoming an elevated plaza linking the houses. The third cluster has carports and parking at grade.

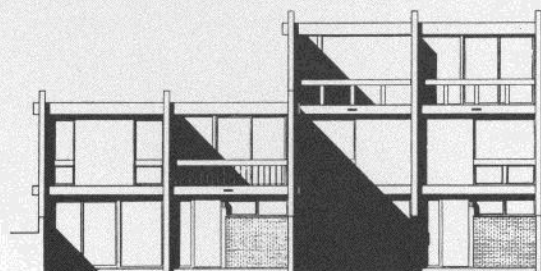




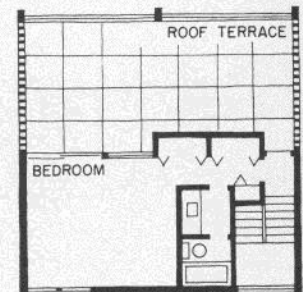
SECOND FLOOR



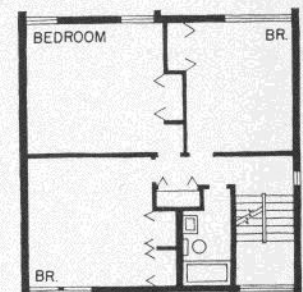
FIRST FLOOR



Elevation and plans of two typical houses. The plans are essentially the same, except that the three-story house has a bedroom instead of a terrace on the second floor and a bedroom and terrace on the third



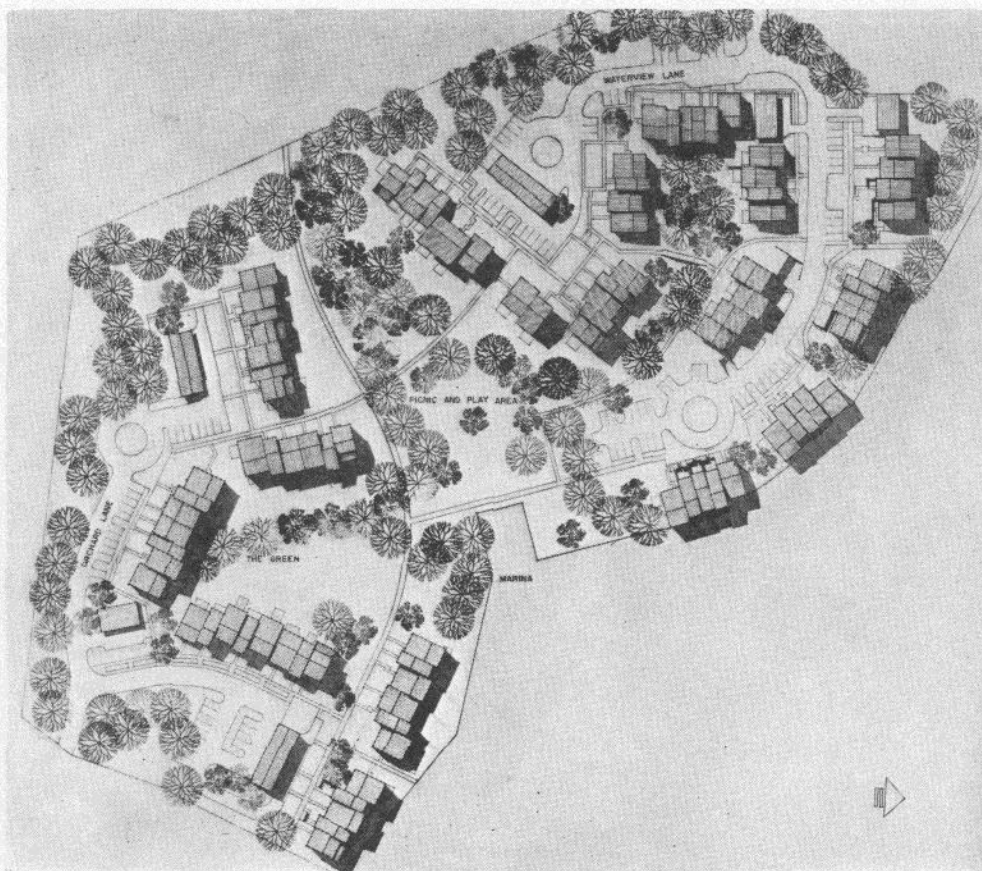
THIRD FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR DUPLICATES THAT OF 2-STORY UNIT AT LEFT





## THE LAKE CLUSTER

ARCHITECTS: *Chloethiel Woodard Smith and Associates*

The houses in the Lake Cluster vary in size from 1,470 to 2,670 square feet, and some have as many as five bedrooms. Small balconies, circular stairs, decks, fireplaces, oriel windows, and skylights have been used to provide variety and give an individual character to each house. Houses built right on the water's edge have private boat docks directly off a loggia. There are 168 parking spaces for this 90-unit cluster. About half of them are in covered carports, the rest are in designated open spaces on grade.

