

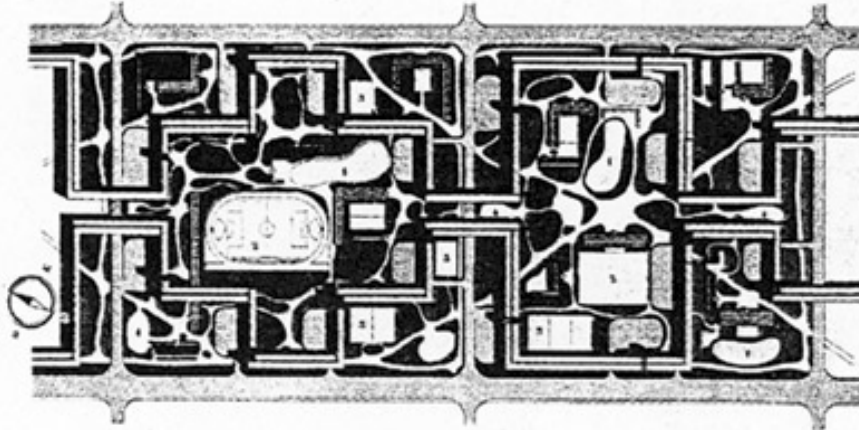
Also during the 1920s, European Modernist architects were developing a new unit of urban design known as the "superblock." Modernist urban design was shaped by the automobile and its characteristics of speed, movement, and efficiency. A Modernist superblock consisted of high-rise apartment towers set in pedestrian parks with motor traffic relegated to elevated streets around the periphery of each block (Figure 11). Following the International Congress for Modern Architecture in 1928, Modernism's leader Le Corbusier criticized Howard's Garden Cities for the "sterile isolation of the individual" and "the annihilation of collective will." Although Le Corbusier's alternative was employed in post-World War II Europe and in the United States for some urban renewal projects, high-rise housing never gained acceptance as a scheme for American suburban design (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 71-73).

At the Regional Planning Association of America, planners began to express that the rapidly spreading, uniform, gridded suburbs were not only infringing on natural lands, but were also failing to create an environment truly different from the city. Clarence Stein and Henry Wright had studied the Garden Cities of Hamstead and Letchworth in England, and wanted to interpret the idea in the United States. Their 1930 design for Radburn employed a system of superblocks, in which houses were arranged along cul-de-sacs surrounding a central pedestrian park (Figure 12). Vehicles were restricted to the periphery (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 62-64; Ames 1995, II-99).

Using a similar system, Clarence Perry designed "neighborhood units" for the Regional Planning Association of New York, where he worked from 1922 to 1929 (Figure 13). A neighborhood unit centered around an elementary school. Its boundaries were formed by arterial streets and its interior traversed by a hierarchical system of minor streets. At the center were community and institutional sites, shops, and public open spaces (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 68-70).

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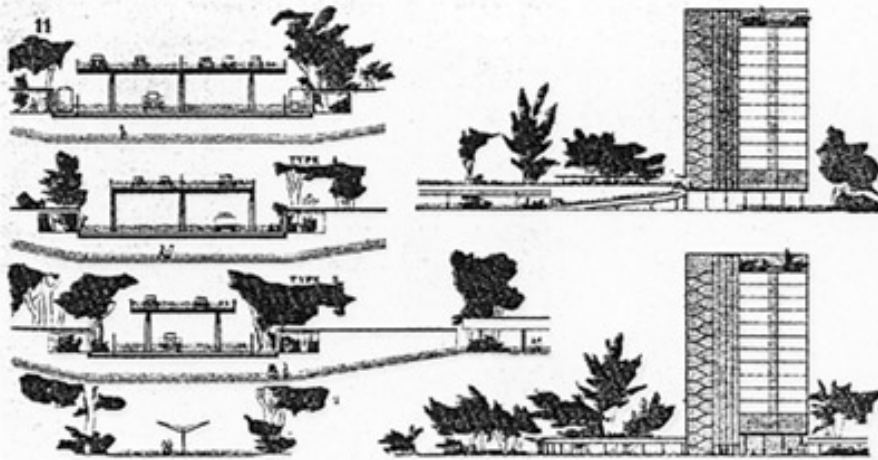
LA "VILLE VERTE" 1000 HAACHROY



SPORT: 1 PISCINE  
2 TENNIS, NETS, etc.  
3 GYM  
4 JAZZ



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**Figure 11: Modernist Superblock**

Source: Southworth, Michael, and Eran Ben-Joseph.  
*Streets and the Shaping of Towns and Cities*, page 73



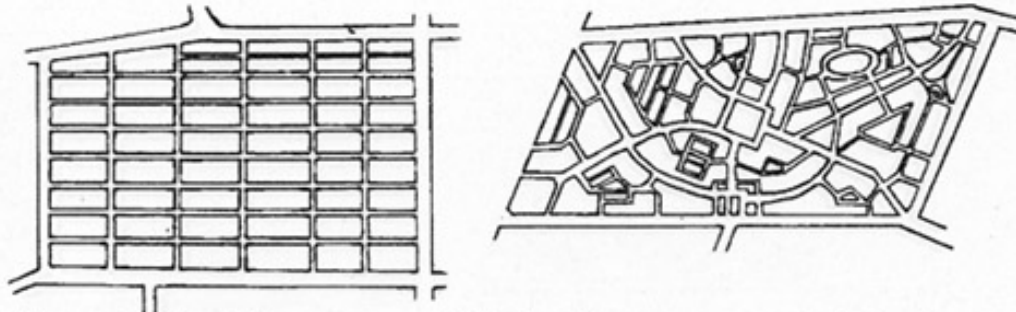
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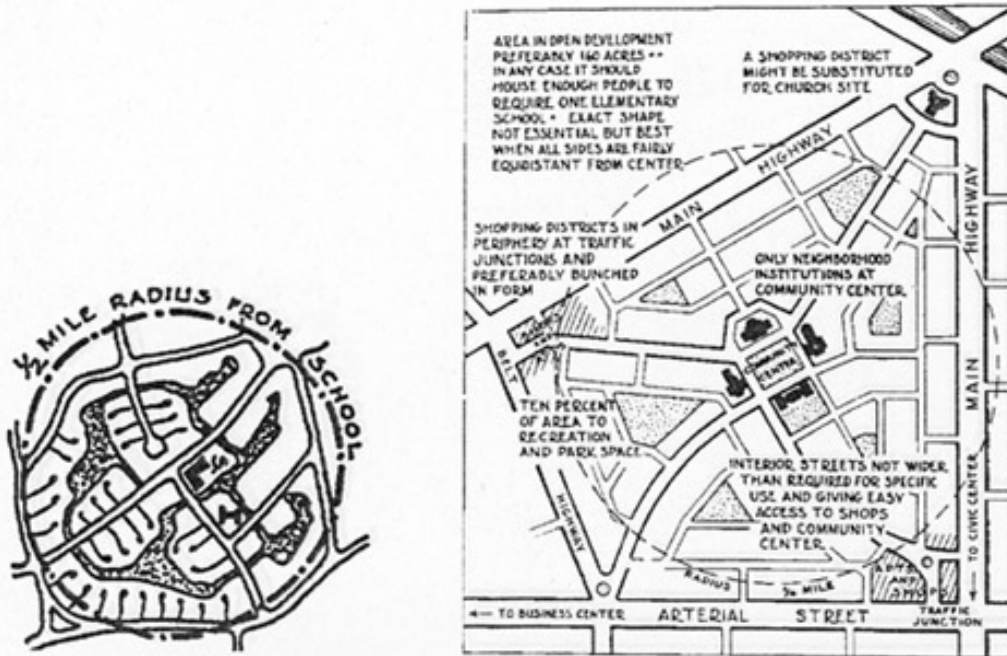
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**Figure 12: Radburn, New Jersey Plan**

Source: Southworth, Michael, and Eran Ben-Joseph.  
*Streets and the Shaping of Towns and Cities*, page 63



The proposed and the present neighborhood street systems. Left: Leading nowhere in particular. Right: Leading to the places where people go.



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**Figure 13: Perry's Neighborhood Plan**

Source: Southworth, Michael, and Eran Ben-Joseph.  
*Streets and the Shaping of Towns and Cities*, page 69

The Greenbelt communities planned in the 1930s by the Resettlement Administration program of the New Deal were based on Perry's neighborhood unit. One of only three constructed, Greenbelt, Maryland, was designed with "loop roads," "motor courts" and cul-de-sacs accessed by collector roads (Figure 14). A band of park land surrounded the community. Although the extensive park lands and pedestrian path system were never adopted by the private sector, the organic street system of the Greenbelt communities heavily influenced the curvilinear layout of post-World War II subdivisions (Southworth and Ben-Joseph 1997, 70; Ames 1995, II-99).