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Look More Closely at Columbia Point's History

To the editor:

I was especially interested in the articles concerning Columbia Point (*Places* 8:4). Having lived in Italy for 16 of the last 20 years (and, unfortunately, having been out of contact with much of what's happening in the U.S.), I had no idea that plans — which many of us had dreamed of in the early '70s — had actually taken form. As a student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1973-75) I had taken part in exploring redevelopment (and rehabilitation) schemes for the peninsula and the public housing project. Together with architect John Hunt (then a student in Urban Design) and the Columbia Point Alcoholism Program we produced a manual ("Building a Home; Building Community") aimed at developing and stimulating self-help strategies for the CPAP and the neighborhood in general. In addition, I coordinated a summer program at the Boston ICA in which a half-hour slide tape ("The Future of Columbia Point") was produced by a group of Columbia Point teenagers. Certainly, these activities were only a small part of the numerous planning and design programs that were carried out in that decade.

I wonder why none of the many precedents were mentioned in the articles. It would have been very interesting if an author had attempted to analyze which (if any) of the many seeds had contributed to the growth of the new community — which is very different from that which had been envisioned, at least in terms of social composition. I wonder how many of the teens — so involved in and committed to the utopia that they designed in the summer of 1975 — continue to live in the neighborhood as adults.

Perhaps Jan Wampler (who prepared an interesting article for the same issue) or a long-term Community Task Force member would be willing to produce a chronology and historical reconstruction of the numerous community-based actions and university co-projects that contributed, even if only in small part, to the present and future of Columbia Point.

Raymond Lorenzo
Perugia, Italy

The New Urbanism Needs a Broader Vision

To the editor:

The Andres Duany et. al. "New Urbanism" seems to me to be as oblivious to culture and place as Modernism was (review articles, *Places* 9:1). Modernism did more than lead to physical disruption of the urban fabric, it disrupted the philosophic sense of unity in communities.

Transit Oriented Development and Traditional Neighborhood Design are important techniques for advancing some of the urban cultural park purposes. But it is too bad that the new urbanists pay so little attention to the formation of cultural, social and environmental institutions, like the city or region as a park, on which I submit the success of their approach will ultimately depend. It is the urban cultural park that is needed to prove the integrating and unifying forces that will make reurbanization acceptable.

Paul Bray
Albany, N.Y.

Paul Bray's article about urban cultural parks, "The New Urbanism: Celebrating the City," appeared in Places 8:4.

Errata

The credits for several images in *Places* 9:2 were incomplete or incorrect. The cover photo, an aerial view of Penang, Malaysia, is by Patricia Tusa Fels. On page 41, the photo of the IBM Technical Center is by Julius Shulman.